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LIVES

OF

EMINENT NOVELISTS

AND

DRAMATISTS.

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THE "CHANDOS CLASSICS."

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LIVES

OF

EMINENT NOVELISTS

AND

DRAMATISTS.

BY

SIR WALTER SCOTT,

AUTHOR OF "ESSAYS ON CHIVALRY, ROMANCE, AND THE DRAMA."

NEW EDITION,

REVISED, WITH ADDITIONAL NOTES.

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PUBLISHERS' PREFACE.

The Publishers have the pleasure of offering in this volume the first cheap edition of Scott's "Lives of the Novelists and Dramatists." The memoirs are valuable, especially as regards the masterly Criticisms on Fiction, as no authority greater than Scott's can be found on that subject.

It is trusted that this volume will be found a valuable addition to the "Chandos Classics."

Bedford Street,
Strand.

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BATTERSEA
POLYTECHNIC
INSTITUTE

PREFATORY MEMOIR.

WALTER SCOTT, poet and novelist, was born on August 15 1771, in Edinburgh. He was the son of Walter Scott, Writer to the Signet, and of Anne Rutherford. His family was ancient and honourable, being that of the Scotts of Harden. He was trained to his father's profession, and in 1792 he was called to the Scottish Bar; but his tastes and inclinations did not incline to the study of the law, and though he became a Clerk of Session, he was never a successful or distinguished lawyer.

Scott's first literary production was a translation of two of Bürger's ballads, "Lenore" and "The Wild Huntsman;" later on he translated and published the "Goetz von Berlichingen" of Goethe. These translations were followed in due time by his "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," which won him a certain amount of literary reputation. He also contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*, then just commenced by some of his early friends.

In the first week of January, 1805, he appeared as an original poet, by the publication of his famous "Lay of the Last Minstrel." It was received by the public with rapture. "In the history of British poetry," says Lockhart, "nothing had ever equalled the demand for the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel.'" Scott became at once the most popular poet of the day. The poem was published by Longmans and Co., in London, and by Archibald Constable and Co., in Edinburgh; but it was printed by James Ballantyne, for whom Scott had formed a sincere friendship from the days when they had been class-mates at school. It was to Ballantyne he had entrusted the printing of the "Border Minstrelsy." The success of the "Lay" brought so much business to the printer's office that he found his capital inadequate to his business, and solicited a loan of Scott—a second one, we must observe. Unhappily the poet thought it would be more prudent to grant it as the price of his taking a third share in the business, than to lend a large sum on the chance of future repayment; and he became a partner of the printers from that date, and was, by this step, ultimately ruined. A long period of prosperity was, however, to intervene before the luckless day on which the Ballantyne firm became bankrupt. It is fair here to observe

that Scott himself was the ruling spirit of the firm as to all literary enterprises, and that judging the taste of the public by his own, he was too apt to overload the business with admirable works which, however, had but a small sale.

He persuaded Constable, in 1805, to undertake an edition of Dryden's Works, which he volunteered to edit, and also to write a memoir of the poet. About this time, he also wrote the first seven chapters of "Waverley," but having taken a friend's opinion on it, and that opinion being unfavourable, he put it away in the drawer of a cabinet, where it remained forgotten entirely for years. Meantime, his edition of Dryden proceeded rapidly, for he had not only a swift and ready pen, but was possessed of the patience and industry which are the great supporters of genius. He rose at this time of his life at five o'clock, and worked from six to nine; after breakfast he worked for two hours longer, and, if the day were wet, all the morning. Probably he composed much of his poetry in the open air. But while Dryden continued to occupy the greater share of his time, he was also engaged on his noble poem of "Marmion," for which Constable offered 1000 guineas very soon after he had commenced it, and actually paid the money before the book was ready for the press. But the publisher was no loser by his generosity, 2000 copies of "Marmion" were sold in less than a month, the price being a guinea and a half the quarto; 60,000 had been sold up to 1848!

In the same year appeared his edition of Dryden, with notes and life, in eighteen volumes, for which he received 756*l*. This work was reprinted in 1821, and the "Life of Dryden" in several subsequent editions of Scott's prose works. "Scott's biography of Dryden," says Lockhart, "the only life of a great poet which he has left us, and also his only *detailed* work on the personal fortunes of one to whom literature was a profession—was penned just before he had begun to apprehend his own destiny . . . . and I doubt, if the entire range of our annals could have furnished a theme more calculated to keep Scott's scrutinizing interest awake, than that which opened on him as he contemplated, step by step, the career of Dryden." The biographer of Scott goes on to point out, that the animated defence which Scott makes of Dryden against his critics, was written at the time when a severe review of "Marmion" had appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* —a singular coincidence!

Constable, shortly after the publication of "Dryden," persuaded Scott to undertake an edition of "Swift" at double the rate of payment. Whilst engaged in collecting the needful materials and information for this work, the indefatigable author actually edited the "Sadler State Papers," the "Somers' Tracts," and Strutt's "Queenhoe Hall," which he also concluded.

At the time he was editing "Swift," Scott lent his aid to John Murray in producing the *Quarterly Review*, and wrote the "Lady of the Lake," which was published in 1809. It obtained even greater favour with the public than the two former poems, and, with it, Scott's

poetical fame reached its zenith. The works of Byron were destined to eclipse them, at least for a time. "Rokeby" and the "Bridal of Triermain" (the latter published anonymously), failed to sell as well as the others had done, and the poet, happily for his nation and the world, began to think of trying another line in literature, and, discovering the lost chapters of "Waverley" in his cabinet, hastened to complete that wonderful story. Meantime the "Swift," in nineteen volumes, had appeared, and obtained a fair share of applause.

The two lives of Swift and Dryden begin this volume, the precedence being given to Swift as a writer of prose fiction—"Gulliver's Travels"—Dryden taking his place as a dramatist. The poets were kinsmen and contemporaries, but in order of Scott's publication the memoir of "Glorious John" ought to have preceded that of the "Dean." Of Swift's life, Lockhart observes that it shows "an intimacy of acquaintance with the obscurest details of the political, social, and literary history of the period of Queen Anne, which it is impossible to consider without feeling a lively regret that he never accomplished a long-cherished purpose of editing 'Pope.'" We can forgive the failure of this purpose easily, when we remember that it was caused by the production of his immortal novels. "Swift" was followed by "Waverley," of which we need not speak; and with wonderful rapidity by his next poem the "Lord of the Isles;" then came "Guy Mannering" by the author of "Waverley;" "The Antiquary"—the Tales of my Landlord—in which a fresh mystification was tried. "Rob Roy," "Ivanhoe," "Kenilworth," &c., each an additional bay in the laurel-wreath of the "Great Unknown," suspected by most people, but still preserving his mystery. Wealth poured in on publishers and author. In 1820 George IV. conferred a baronetcy on Scott on account of his poetical renown; doubtless also with a shrewd suspicion that he thus honoured not only a poet, but a far greater novelist.

In 1821, Scott proposed to the Ballantynes to issue, as they had designed to do long years before, a novelists' library, offering his own services gratuitously as editor and memoir-writer, the profits going to the firm entirely. This offer was gratefully accepted, and the "Novelists' Library" was commenced in February, 1821. But it proved an unsuccessful speculation, the volumes being large, heavy, and double-columned, and the authors passing out of fashion; a few,—who retain only a nominal place in public estimation at present,—being even then rapidly becoming obsolete. The lives of Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, Johnson, and Goldsmith preserve, however, an undying interest, and it may not be uninteresting to have from the pen of Scott sketches of other novelists famous in their day, however ignorant the present generation may be of their works. These lives are reprinted in the present volume.

The domestic life of Scott was as happy as his literary life was prosperous. He was beloved by an amiable wife and promising children; he had founded a new branch of the old Scotts; he had

built for himself a house which fulfilled all the dreams of his fancy; he was visited, courted, and caressed by the people of all nations. But the evening of his days was not destined to set in all this splendour. The houses of Ballantyne and Constable, affected by the pecuniary panic of 1825, failed, and became bankrupt. Scott, in consequence of his partnership with Ballantyne, (he was the only member of the firm who possessed money,) was answerable for their deficiencies, and found himself ruined.

It was an awful blow. His authorship of the "Waverley" novels had to be acknowledged in a manner he could never have anticipated. But Scott came nobly out of the ordeal, though the domestic affliction of his wife's death fell on him at the same time. He refused to be relieved of his obligations by bankruptcy, but offered to work for his creditors till the debt was paid. They trusted him wisely and generously, but the strain proved too much. Anxiety, regret, incessant work killed him; but not before the sale of "Woodstock" and the "Life of Napoleon," of "The Fair Maid of Perth," "Anne of Gierstein," "Count Robert of Paris," and sundry other works had reduced his great liabilities from 150,000*l.* to 60,000*l.* His honesty and dauntless industry redeemed the one great error of his life—the secrecy he had preserved so strangely with regard to the authorship of the Waverley novels.

He died at Abbotsford 21st of September, 1832, aged sixty-one, and was buried at Dryburgh Abbey, leaving to his country the glory of having produced the greatest novelist ever yet known; whose place has worthily been deemed next to Shakspeare, as one who like him drew "each change of many-coloured life." He was a genius also who joined to his great talents the worth of a good, honest, and honourable man.

LIVES OF EMINENT

NOVELISTS AND DRAMATISTS.

MEMOIRS OF JONATHAN SWIFT, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

Swift's parentage and birth—His life at College—His first residence with Sir William Temple—Visits Oxford—He takes orders, and obtains the living of Kilroot—Resigns that living in favour of a friend, and returns to England—His second residence with Sir William Temple—The "Battle of the Books," and "Tale of a Tub" —Verses on the Burning of Whitehall—Swift's correspondence with Miss Waryng—He becomes acquainted with Stella—Sir William Temple dies, and bequeaths his works to Swift—Swift's views of promotion at the Court are disappointed.

THE life of Swift forms an interesting and instructive narrative to all who love to contemplate those alternations of good and evil which chequer the fate of individuals distinguished by their talents and by their fame. Born under circumstances of the most pressing calamity, educated by the cold and careless charity of relations, denied the usual honours attached to academical study, and spending years of dependence upon the inefficient patronage of Sir William Temple, the earlier part of his history may be considered as a continued tale of depressed genius and disappointed hopes. Yet, under all these disadvantages, Swift arose to be the counsellor of a British administration, the best defender of their measures, and the intimate friend of all who were noble or renowned, learned or witty, in the classic age of Queen Anne. The events of his latter years were not less strongly contrasted. Involved in the fall of his patrons, he became a discontented and persecuted exile from England and from his friends, yet, almost at once, attained a pitch of popularity which rendered him the idol of Ireland, and the dread of those who ruled that kingdom. Nor was his domestic fate less extraordinary—loving and beloved by two of the most beautiful and interesting women of the time, he was doomed

to form a happy and tranquil union with neither, and saw them sink successively to the grave, under the consciousness that their mortal disease had its source in disappointed hopes and ill-requited affection. His talents also, the source of his fame and his pride, whose brilliancy had so long dazzled and delighted mankind, became gradually clouded by disease and perverted by passion, as their possessor approached the goal of life; and, ere he attained it, were levelled far below those of ordinary humanity. From the life of Swift, therefore, may be derived the important lesson, that, as no misfortunes should induce genius to despair, no rank of fame, however elevated, should encourage its possessor to presumption. And those to whom fate has denied such brilliant qualities, or to whom she has refused the necessary opportunities of displaying them, may be taught, while perusing the history of this illustrious man, how little happiness depends upon the possession of transcendent genius, of political influence, or of popular renown.

Jonathan Swift, Doctor of Divinity, and Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin, was descended from the younger branch of the family of Swifts, in Yorkshire, which had been settled in that county for many years. His immediate ancestor was the Reverend Thomas Swift, vicar of Goodrich, in Herefordshire, and proprietor of a small estate in that neighbourhood. At the beginning of the civil wars this gentleman distinguished himself by his zeal and activity in the cause of Charles I.; and his grandson has recorded, in a separate memoir, his exploits and sufferings during the civil wars.* After having been repeatedly plundered by the parliamentary soldiers, even to the clothes of the infant in the cradle (which, according to family tradition, was Jonathan, father of the Dean), and to the last loaf which was to sup-

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* Swift put up a plain monument to his grandfather, and also presented a cup to the church of Goodrich, or Gotheridge. He sent a pencilled elevation of the monument, (a simple tablet,) to Mrs. Howard, who returned it with the following lines, inscribed on the drawing by Pope. The paper is indorsed, in Swift's hand, "Model of a monument for my grandfather, with Mr. Pope's roguery."

JONATHAN SWIFT

Had the gift,
By fatherige, motherige,
And by brotherige,
To come from Gutherige,
But now is spoil'd clean,
And an Irish Dean.
In this church he has put
A stone of two foot;
With a cup and a can, Sir,
In respect to his grandsire;
So, Ireland, change thy tone,
And cry, O hone! O hone!
For England hath its own.

The lines, originally written in pencil by Pope, are traced over in ink by Dr. Lyons, as a memorandum bears. It occurred amongst Dr. Lyon's manuscripts.

port his numerous family, Thomas Swift died in the year 1658, leaving ten sons, and three or four daughters, with no other fortune than the small estate to which he was born, and that almost ruined by fines and sequestrations.

The sufferings of this gentleman were of some service to his family after the Restoration; for Godwin Swift, his eldest son, who had studied at Gray's Inn, and had been called to the bar, was appointed Attorney-General of the Palatinate of Tipperary, under the Duke of Ormond. He was a man of talents, and appears to have possessed a considerable revenue, which he greatly embarrassed by embarking in speculative and expensive projects, to which his nephew, Jonathan, ever after entertained an unconquerable aversion. Meantime, however, the success of Godwin Swift, in his profession, attracted to Ireland three of his brethren, William, Jonathan, and Adam, all of whom settled in that kingdom, and there lived and died.

Jonathan Swift, the father of the celebrated author, was the sixth or seventh son of the Vicar of Goodrich; the number of whose descendants, and the obscurity of their fortunes, does not admit of distinguishing his lineage more accurately. Jonathan, like his brother Godwin, appears to have been bred to the law, though not like him called to the bar. He added to the embarrassments of his situation by marrying Abigail Ericke, of Leicestershire, a lady whose ancient genealogy was her principal dowry. The Dean has himself informed us, that his father obtained some agencies and employments in Ireland; but his principal promotion seems to have been the office of steward to the Society of the King's Inns, Dublin, to which he was nominated in 1665.

This situation he did not long enjoy, for he died in 1667, two years after his appointment, leaving an infant daughter and his widow in a very destitute situation, as Mrs. Swift was unable, without the assistance of the Society, even to defray the expense of her husband's funeral.

Dryden William Swift, the brother of the deceased, seems to have been active in behalf of his sister-in-law; but Godwin, who was supposed to be wealthy, was her chief support; and upon the 30th of November, 1667, being St. Andrew's Day, she gave birth to the celebrated Jonathan Swift. The place of his birth was a small house, now called No. 7, in Hoey's Court, Dublin, which is still pointed out by the inhabitants of that quarter. His infancy was marked by a chance as singular as that of his father, whose cradle had been plundered of the bedding by Kirle's troopers. The nurse to whom he was committed was a native of Whitehaven, to which town she was recalled by the commands of a dying relation, from whom she expected a legacy. She actually stole away her charge, out of mere affection, and carried him to Whitehaven, where he resided three years; for his health was so delicate, that rather than hazard a second voyage his mother chose to fix his residence for a time with the female who had given such a singular proof of her attachment. The nurse was so careful of the child's education, that when he returned to Dublin he

was able to spell, and when five years old he could read any chapter of the Bible.

Swift was now to share the indigence of a mother whom he tenderly loved, and to subsist upon the support afforded by his uncle Godwin. It seems probable that these irritating and degrading circumstances sunk deep into his haughty temper, even at an early period of life, and that even then commenced that war of his spirit with the world which only ended when his faculties were utterly subdued by disease. Born a posthumous child, and bred up as an object of charity, he early adopted the custom of observing his birthday, as a term, not of joy, but of sorrow, and of reading, when it annually recurred, the striking passage of Scripture in which Job laments and execrates the day upon which it was said in his father's house "that a man-child was born." The narrowness of the allowance afforded for his maintenance and education added to his unhappiness, and was naturally imputed by him to the sordid parsimony of his uncle. It is true that subsequent events showed that Godwin Swift was under the necessity of regulating this allowance by the real state of his embarrassed circumstances, rather than by the opinion which his nephew, in common with the rest of the world, entertained of his wealth. But although it was afterwards discovered that his liberality had borne full proportion to the former criterion, Swift appears never to have lost the unfavourable impression which had once been made, and certainly held Godwin Swift's remembrance neither in love nor veneration.

Meanwhile his education proceeded apace. At the age of six years he was sent to the school of Kilkenny, endowed and maintained by the Ormond family, where his name, cut in school-boy fashion upon his desk or form, is still shown to strangers. Here he learned to say, *latino-anglicè*, the words *Mi dux et amasti lux*, the first germ of the numerous *jeux d'esprit* of that nature which passed between him and Sheridan during his declining years.

From Kilkenny Swift was removed, at the age of fourteen, and admitted into Trinity College, Dublin, where, as appears from the book of the senior lecturers, he was received as a pensioner under the tuition of St. George Ashe on 24th April, 1862. His cousin, Thomas Swift, was admitted at the same time; and the mention of the two names throughout the College records, without the Christian appellative, has thrown uncertainty upon some minute points of the Dean's biography.

When Swift was entered at the University, the usual studies of the period were required of him, and of these some were very ill suited to his genius. Logic, then deemed a principal object of learning, was in vain presented to his notice; for his disposition altogether rejected the learned sophistry of Smiglecius, Keckermannus, Burgersdicius, and other ponderous worthies now hardly known by name; nor could his tutor ever persuade him to read three pages in one of them, though some acquaintance with the commentators of

Aristotle was absolutely necessary at passing examination for his degrees. Neither did he pay regular attention to other studies more congenial to his disposition. He read and studied rather for amusement, and to divert melancholy reflections, than with the zeal of acquiring knowledge. But his reading, however desultory, must have been varied and extensive, since he is said to have already drawn a rough sketch of the "Tale of a Tub," which he communicated to his companion Mr. Waryng. We must conclude then, that a mere idler of the seventeenth century might acquire, in his hours of careless and irregular reading, a degree of knowledge which would startle a severe student of the present age. We have few means of judging of the extent of Swift's real learning; it cannot perhaps be termed profound, but it was certainly extensive. His writings evince great general acquaintance with history and poetry, both ancient and modern; nor is he ever at a loss for such classical allusions and quotations as most aptly illustrate the matter of which he treats. Yet although he thought so lightly of his own acquisitions, that he talked of having lost his degree for dulness and insufficiency, and although he used with great vehemence to rebuke those who bestowed the name of scholar on any one whom they could not prove to have spent most of his days in study, the character of a mere plodding student did not stand high in his estimation. Bentley, whom he unjustly ranked in this dull and laborious class, used to be honoured with the epithets of *Jubar Anglicanum*, *Lux Britanniæ*, *Sidus Britannicum*, &c., by the foreign literati. This Swift could not bear, and in the predictions of Isaac Bickerstaff, he launches some satirical shafts at the heavy politeness of the High-Dutch *illustrissimi*, and their extravagant compliments to each other.

While Swift, however, was pursuing his studies in this vague and desultory manner, they would have been altogether interrupted by the death of his uncle Godwin and the derangement of his affairs, which then first became public, had he not found another patron in his uncle Dryden William Swift. This gentleman gave the necessary support to his orphan nephew, and it would seem with more grace and apparent kindness, though not more liberally in amount than his brother Godwin, for he too was in narrow circumstances. But Swift always cherished his memory, and recorded him as the "best of his relations." He used also to mention an incident which occurred while he was at college, of which Willoughby Swift, his cousin, the son of Dryden William, was the hero. Sitting one day in his chamber, absolutely penniless, he saw a seaman in the court below, who seemed inquiring for the apartment of one of the students. It occurred to Swift that this man might bring a message from his cousin Willoughby, then settled as a Lisbon merchant, and the thought scarcely had crossed his mind when the door opened, and the stranger approaching him, produced a large leathern purse of silver coin, and poured the contents before him as a present from his cousin. Swift, in his ecstacy, offered the bearer a part of his treasure, which the honest sailor generously declined. And from that moment, Swift, who had so deeply experienced the miseries

of indigence, resolved so to manage his scanty income, as never again to be reduced to extremity. The system by which he regulated his expense was so very rigid, that from many of his journals still existing, it is clear he could have accounted for every penny of his expenditure, during any year of his life, from the time of his being at college, until the total decline of his faculties.

Pleasure, as well as necessity, interfered with Swift's studies. Poverty, and the sense of the contempt which accompanies it, often gives to a lofty temper a cast of recklessness and desperation, and Swift's mind was by one of his friends well likened to an evoked spirit, that would do mischief if not supplied with constant employment. Johnson, who studied at college under similar disadvantages, has expressed such feelings in his own nervous language. Hearing from Mr. Boswell that he had been considered as a gay and frolicsome fellow, while at Pembroke, he answered, "Ah! Sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness that they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power, and all authority." Even such a rebel against college discipline Swift appears to have been, under similar circumstances; and it is remarkable, that, though far inferior in humour, in purity of style, and in comprehensive genius, Johnson bore a strong resemblance in his morbid temperament, political opinions, and habits of domination in private society to the Dean of St. Patrick's. Swift, therefore, while under the dominion of this untamed spirit, was guilty of many irregularities, some which occasioned reproof, and some which led to yet more severe consequences. He repeatedly neglected, and affected to contemn the discipline of the college, and frequented taverns and coffee houses. In the wantonness of his wit, he assailed the fellows of the University with satirical effusions, to which the speeches occasionally delivered by the *Terræ Filius* gave sufficient scope. But though this species of saturnalia had a prescriptive licence, experience might have taught Swift that it was not to be relied on, and that the individual ridiculed watched his time and opportunity to retort upon the satirist the pain which he had inflicted. The earlier part of Swift's academical course was more slightly marked with these irregularities, for no record of penal infliction occurs, until a *special grace* for the degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred upon him, on 13th February, 1685-6. We are not therefore to look for the cause of the degrading manner in which this degree was bestowed, (as flowing, not from the merit of the student, but the unearned favour of the University,) in Swift's irregularities, but in the neglect of those studies which were then held essential parts of education. In going through the preliminary dissertation, he was ignorant even of the necessary syllogistic forms. He answered the arguments of the impugners in common language, and the proctor reduced his replies into syllogism, the candidate thus displaying a degree of ignorance of what was then miscalled the art of reasoning, which must of itself have called for the mark of incapacity which was attached to his degree. Yet such was

the strength of Swift's memory, that, after thirty or forty years, he could repeat to Sheridan the propositions, as they were attacked and defended, in their proper scholastic technicality.

The disgraceful note with which his degree had been granted, probably added to Swift's negligence, and gave edge to his satirical propensities. Between the periods of 14th November, 1685, and 8th October, 1687, he incurred no less than seventy penalties for non-attendance at chapel, for neglecting lectures, for being absent from the evening roll-call, and for town-haunting, which is the academical phrase for absence from college without licence. At length these irregularities called forth a more solemn censure, for on 18th March, 1686-7, with his cousin, Thomas Swift, his chum, Mr. Warren, and four others, he incurred the disgrace of a public admonition for notorious neglect of duties. His second public punishment was of a nature yet more degrading. On 20th November, 1688, Swift, the future oracle of Ireland, was, by a sentence of the Vice-Provost, and senior fellows of the University, convicted of insolent conduct towards the junior Dean (Owen Lloyd), and of exciting dissension within the walls of the college. He shared with two companions the suspension of his academical degree, and two of the delinquents, Swift being one, further were sentenced to crave public pardon of the junior Dean. The bitterness of spirit with which Swift submitted to this despotic infliction, if indeed he obeyed it, for of this there is no absolute proof, may be more easily conceived than described. The sense of his resentment shows itself in the dislike which he exhibits to his Alma Mater, the Trinity College of Dublin, and the satirical severity with which he persecutes Dr. Owen Lloyd, the junior Dean, before whom he had been ordained to make this unworthy prostration.

This unpleasant circumstance of the Dean's academical life has become gradually confounded with the yet more severe penalty of expulsion, inflicted upon John Jones, one of his companions. Mr. Richardson has recorded a tradition that Swift was expelled from college for writing a Tripos, as it is called, or satirical oration, uttered by him as Terræ-Filius. The research of the learned Dr. Barrett has ascertained that such a tripos was actually delivered, 11th July, 1688. He had published its contents, which are preserved in the Lanesborough MS., and he has proved from the college records that Jones, the Terræ-Filius of the period, was actually deprived of his degree for the false and scandalous reflections contained in that satire, though the sentence was afterwards mitigated into a temporary suspension of his degree and academical rights. But Jones, not Swift, was the Terræ-Filius so degraded. The inaccuracy of Richardson's informer may be easily pardoned : he was recollecting the events of a remote period, when Swift and Jones, friends and associates, both experienced punishment for petulant satire and insubordination. It is not, therefore, wonderful that he confounded the circumstances attending their delinquencies, and attributed the more weighty offence, an offence too, of which Swift was likely to have been guilty, and the more severe punish-

ment to him who afterwards became the object of general attention. It is probable, likewise, that the tripos may have been heightened by the satirical strokes of Swift; though I cannot think it likely that he was the principal author of the work for which Jones sustained the sentence of expulsion, since, with all his grossness, it exhibits little of his humour.

In 1688 the war broke out in Ireland, and Swift, then in his twenty-first year, without money and if not without learning, at least without the reputation of possessing it, with the stains of turbulence and insubordination attached to his character, and without a single friend to protect, receive, or maintain him, left the College of Dublin. Guided, it may be supposed, more by affection than hope, he bent his course to England, and travelled on foot to his mother's residence, who was then in Leicestershire. Herself in a dependent and precarious situation, Mrs. Swift could only recommend to her son to solicit the patronage of Sir William Temple, whose lady was her relation, and had been well acquainted with the family of the Swifts, and in whose house Thomas Swift, the cousin of our author, had already resided as a chaplain.

The application was made and succeeded; but for some time Sir William Temple's patronage seemed to be unattended either by confidence or affection. The accomplished statesman and polite scholar was probably, for a time, unreconciled to the irritable habits and imperfect learning of his new inmate. But Sir William's prejudices became gradually weaker as Swift's exquisite power of observation increased his faculties of pleasing, while his knowledge was expanded by a course of study so hard that it engaged eight hours of every day. Such a space of time well employed soon rendered a man of Swift's powers an invaluable treasure to a patron like Temple, with whom he remained about two years. His studies were partially interrupted by bad health. He had contracted, from a surfeit of stone-fruit, a giddiness and coldness of stomach which almost brought him to his grave, and the effects of which he felt during his whole life-time. At one time he was so ill that he visited Ireland in hopes of experiencing benefit from his native air, but finding no advantage from the change, he again returned to Moorpark, and employed in his studies the intervals which his disorder afforded. It was now that he experienced marks of confidence from Temple, who permitted him to be present at his confidential interviews with King William when that monarch honoured Moorpark with his visits, a distinction which Temple owed to their former intimacy in Holland, and which he received with respectful ease, and repaid by sound and constitutional advice. Nay, when Sir William's gout confined him to his chamber, the duty of attending the King devolved upon Swift, and it is recorded by all the poet's biographers that William offered him a troop of horse, and showed him how to cut asparagus the Dutch way. It would be unjust to suppress the additional advantage he acquired in learning by the royal example to eat the same vegetable with Dutch economy, on which subject the reader will find a lively anecdote at the bottom of

the page.* Other advantages of a more solid nature were, however, held out to his ambition, and he was led to hope that he would be provided for in the church, to which profession he was destined, as well by inclination as by so fair a prospect of preferment. The high trust reposed in him warranted these hopes. For he was employed by Sir William Temple to lay before King William the reasons why his Majesty ought to assent to the bill for triennial parliaments; and he strengthened Temple's opinion by several arguments drawn from English history. But the King persevered in his opposition, and the bill was thrown out by the influence of the Crown in the House of Commons. This was the first intercourse that Swift had with courts; and he was wont to tell his friends that it helped to cure him of vanity; having probably anticipated success in his negotiation, and being mortified in proportion by its unexpected failure.

In 1692 Swift went to Oxford for the purpose of taking his master's degree, to which he was admitted on the 5th July in that year. He seems to have been pleased with the civilities he met at Oxford, and observes that he was ashamed to have been more obliged in a few weeks to strangers than ever he was in seven years to Dublin College. The favour of Oxford necessarily implies learning and genius. In the former Swift was now eminent, and in the latter showed the fair promise of an active and enterprising mind. Even in 1691 he informs his friend, Mr. Kendal, that he had "written and burned, and written again upon all manner of subjects, more than perhaps any man in England." Amidst these miscellaneous efforts, poetry was not neglected. The Muses met him on their own sacred ground, and it is at Oxford that Swift produced his first verses. It is a version of Horace, Book II. Ode 18.

Besides these verses we find Swift attempting another style of poetical composition less favourable to his fame. This produced his Pindaric Odes, the only kind of writing which he seriously attempted without attaining excellence, and which must therefore be accounted among the injudicious efforts of a genius which had not yet become acquainted with its own powers. The undertaking is said to have been pressed upon him by Sir William and Lady Temple, who

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* This characteristic story is given on the authority of the father of my friend, Mr. M. Weld Hartstonge. Alderman George Faulkner of Dublin, the well-known bookseller, happening one day to dine in company with Dr. Leland the historian, the conversation adverted to the illustrious Dean of St. Patrick's. Faulkner, who was the Dean's printer and publisher on many occasions, mentioned, that one day being detained late at the Deanery-house, in correcting some proof-sheets for the press, Swift made the worthy alderman stay to dinner. Amongst other vegetables, asparagus formed one of the dishes. The Dean helped his guest, who shortly again called upon his host to be helped a second time; when the Dean, pointing to the alderman's plate, "Sir, first finish what you have upon your plate."—"What, sir, eat my stalks?"—"Ay, sir! King William always ate the stalks!"—"And George," rejoined the historian, (who was himself remarkably proud, and very pompous,) "what, were you blockhead enough to obey him?"—"Yes, doctor, and if you had dined with Dean Swift, *tête-à-tête*, faith, you would have been obliged to eat your stalks too!"

were admirers of Cowley. But it is reasonable enough to suppose that Swift should have turned voluntarily towards that kind of metaphysical poetry in which wit (if wit consists in presenting unexpected and ingenious combinations) is the leading and distinguishing feature; and after all the vituperation which has been heaped upon these odes, they are not, generally speaking, worse than the pindarics of Donne and Cowley, which, in the earlier part of the century, gained these authors unbounded applause. It is said that Swift communicated these poetical exercises to Dryden, whose concise reply,—"Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet,"—he neither forgot nor pardoned. One of the Odes is inscribed to the Athenian Society, in strains of eulogy of which Swift must have been afterwards ashamed, when he recollected that the Apollo of this English Athens was no other than John Dunton the bookseller. With the exception of these abortive attempts at a species of poetry of which the fashion had passed away, it does not appear that Swift made any efforts towards literary distinction; for the verses addressed to Congreve, November, 1693, and those to Sir William Temple, in December following, seem to have been the effusions of private friendship. From the first we learn, that Swift's talents had raised him above the obscurity which attended his first years at Moorpark, and that he was now on friendly terms with Congreve, a man of the brightest comic genius that Britain has produced. The same verses teach us, that he already felt confidence in his powers of satire, and could predict the effects of that "hate to fools," which he afterwards assumed as his principal characteristic.

> My hate—whose lash just Heaven had long decreed,
> Shall on a day make sin and folly bleed.

The verses on Sir William Temple's illness and recovery are of a different mood, and express strongly and pathetically the miseries of the precarious situation under which his proud and independent spirit was then struggling. He thus addresses his Muse, which, since Cowley's time, was the established mode in which a poet expressed his complaints:—

> Wert thou right woman, thou should'st scorn to look
> On an abandon'd wretch, by hopes forsook;
> Forsook by hopes, ill fortune's last relief,
> Assign'd for life to unremitting grief;
> For let Heaven's wrath enlarge these weary days,
> If hope e'er dawn the smallest of its rays,
> Time o'er the happy takes so swift a flight,
> And treads so soft, so easy, and so light,
> That we the wretched, creeping far behind,
> Can scarce th' impression of his footsteps find.
> * * * * *
> To thee I owe that fatal bent of mind,
> Still to unhappy restless thoughts inclined;
> To thee, what oft I vainly strive to hide,
> That scorn of fools, by fools mistook for pride;

From thee whatever virtue takes its rise,
Grows a misfortune, or becomes a vice;
Such were thy rules to be poetically great:—
"Stoop not to interest, flattery, or deceit;
Nor with hired thoughts be thy devotion paid;
Learn to disdain their mercenary aid;
Be this thy sure defence, thy brazen wall,
Know no base action, at no guilt look pale;
And since unhappy distance thus denies
T' expose thy soul, clad in this poor disguise;
Since thy few ill-presented graces seem
To breed contempt where thou hast hoped esteem."

These last lines probably allude to the coldness of Sir William Temple, and to a disagreement which began to take place between them. Swift sighed after independence, and seems to have thought that Temple delayed providing for him, from the selfish view of retaining his assistance, now become necessary to him. Temple, on the other hand, regarded his dependent's impatience as if tinctured with ingratitude. He offered him, but with coldness, an employment worth 100*l.* a year, in the office of the Rolls in Ireland, of which he was then master. To this Swift answered, that since this offer relieved him from the charge of being driven into the church for a maintenance, he was resolved to go to Ireland to take holy orders. And thus they parted in mutual displeasure: Temple positively refusing to pledge himself by any promise of provision, in the event of his consenting to remain with him; and Swift determined to exert and maintain his independence.

When Swift arrived in Ireland, he found that the bishops, to whom he applied for orders, required some certificate of his conduct during the time he had resided with Sir William Temple. This must have been a grating task; for to obtain such a testimonial required both submission and entreaty; and accordingly Swift appears to have paused nearly five months before endeavouring to procure it. The submission, however, was at length made, the entreaty listened to, and "Swift's penitentiary letter" formed, probably, the groundwork of reconciliation with his patron. Within less than twelve days after the date of that letter he must have received the testimonial he desired, for his letters for deacon's orders are dated 18th October, 1694, and those for priest's orders on the 13th January following. It seems probable that Sir William Temple added to the certificate desired some recommendation to Lord Capel, then Lord-deputy of Ireland; for almost immediately upon taking orders Swift obtained the prebend of Kilroot, in the diocese of Connor, worth about one hundred pounds a year. To this small living he retired, and assumed the character of a country clergyman.

Swift's life at Kilroot, however, so different from that which he had led with Sir William Temple, where he shared the society of all that were ennobled either by genius or birth, soon became insipid. In the meanwhile Temple, who had learned by the loss of Swift his real value,

became solicitous that he should return to Moorpark. While Swift hesitated between relinquishing the mode of life which he had chosen and returning to that which he had relinquished, his resolution appears to have been determined by a circumstance highly characteristic of his exalted benevolence. In an excursion from his habitation he met a clergyman, with whom he formed an acquaintance, which proved him to be learned, modest, well-principled, the father of eight children, and a curate at the rate of forty pounds a year. Without explaining his purpose Swift borrowed this gentleman's black mare—having no horse of his own—rode to Dublin, resigned the prebendary of Kilroot, and obtained a grant of it for this new friend. When he gave the presentation to the poor clergyman, he kept his eyes steadily fixed on the old man's face, which at first only expressed pleasure at finding himself preferred to a living; but when he found that it was that of his benefactor, who had resigned in his favour, his joy assumed so touching an expression of surprise and gratitude that Swift, himself deeply affected, declared he had never experienced so much pleasure as at that moment. The poor clergyman, at Swift's departure, pressed upon him the black mare, which he did not choose to hurt him by refusing; and thus mounted for the first time on a horse of his own, with fourscore pounds in his purse, Swift again embarked for England, and resumed his situation at Moorpark, as Sir William Temple's confidential secretary.

Swift returned to the house of Sir William Temple rather as a confidential friend than as a dependent companion. The mark of kindness and confidence which he had exhibited in relinquishing that independence after which he had longed so earnestly, marked at once the generosity and the kindness of his disposition, and Sir William was insensible to neither. He resided with that great man from his return to England in 1695, till Temple's death in 1699, scarce a cloud intervening to disturb the harmony of their friendship. A cold look from his patron, such was the veneration with which Swift regarded Temple, made him unhappy for days;* his faculties were devoted to his service, and during his last decline Swift registered, with pious fidelity, every change in his disorder; and concluded the journal, "He died at one o'clock this morning, 27th January, 1698-9), and with him all that was good and amiable among men." From another memorandum, copied by Thomas Steele, Esq., junior, we have this farther character by our author of his early patron: "He was a person of the greatest wisdom, justice, liberality, politeness, eloquence, of his age and nation; the truest lover of his country, and one that deserved more from it by his eminent public services than any man before or since: besides his great discerning of the commonwealth of learning, having been universally esteemed the most accomplished writer of his time."

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* In the Journal to Stella, he says, "Don't you remember how I used to be in pain, when Sir William Temple would look cold and out of humour for three or four days, and I used to suspect a hundred reasons? I have plucked up my spirit since then, faith; he spoiled a fine gentleman."—S.

Among the most acceptable services which Swift could render Temple during this period, was his powerful assistance in the dispute concerning the superiority of ancient or modern learning, in which his patron had taken an anxious share, and had experienced some rough treatment from Wotton. This controversy, with other foolish fashions, had passed to England from France, where Fontenelle and Perrault had first ventured to assert the cause of the moderns. Upon its merits it may be sufficient to observe, that the field of comparison is infinitely too wide to admit of precise parallels, or of accurate reasoning. In works of poetry and imagination the precedence may be decidedly allotted to the ancients, owing to the superior beauties of their language, and because they were the first to employ those general and obvious funds of illustration, which can appear original in those only by whom they were first used. On the other hand, in physical science, which necessarily is gradually enlarging its bounds both by painful research and casual discovery, and in ethics, where the moderns enjoy the advantages of a pure religion and more free polity, it seems that they have far outshone their predecessors. But there is an ardour in literary controversy which does not rest contented with a drawn-battle. The arguments in favour of the moderns were adopted in England by Mr. Wotton, in his "Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning," and indignantly combated by Sir William Temple in his treatise on the same subject. Among other works of the ancients on which he founded the plea of their pre-eminence, Temple unhappily referred to the Epistles of Phalaris, now generally regarded as spurious, but which he pronounced to exhibit "such diversity of passion, such freedom of thought, such knowledge of life and contempt of death, as breathed in every line the tyrant and the commander." Wotton replied to this treatise, and was seconded by the learned Bentley, who had the double motive of detecting the spurious Phalaris, and of vindicating himself from the charge of incivility, respecting the loan of a manuscript from the King's library to the Honourable Mr. Boyle, then engaged in an edition of the Epistles. This gave occasion to the treatise called "Boyle against Bentley," and to the reply of that profound scholar, known by the name of "Bentley against Boyle." Swift felt doubly interested in this dispute; first, on account of the share his patron had in the controversy; and secondly, because the literati of Oxford, with whose conduct towards him he had been so highly satisfied, were united against Bentley, and in the cause of his antagonist. The "Battle of the Books" was the consequence of Swift's interest in behalf of Sir William Temple; and it was probably shown and handed about in manuscript during his lifetime, although it was not printed until some years afterwards. The idea is taken from Coutray's "Histoire Poetique de la Guerre novellement declarée entre les anciens et les modernes," a spirited poem, divided into eleven books, inferior to Swift's work in personal satire and raciness of humour, but strongly resembling the "Battle of the Books" in the plan and management of the literary warfare. About the same time, Swift

appears to have revised and completed his "Tale of a Tub," one of his most remarkable productions. The preliminary advertisements of the bookseller in 1704, mention, that both these treatises appear to have been arranged for publication in 1697, the last year of Sir William Temple's life; there is, therefore, reason to believe that his death prevented their being then given to the world.

During this period, Swift's muse did not remain entirely idle. The nervous verses on the burning of Whitehall, occur in his handwriting, and with his corrections, among the papers of Mr. Lyons. It is remarkable, that while the first couplet breathes that zeal for the property of the church, which afterwards dictated so many of Swift's publications, the tenor of the whole is completely in unison with revolution principles, and perhaps they are more violently expressed respecting the execution of Charles the First, than would have received the applause of many determined Whigs. The rough satirical force of the lines somewhat resembles the poetry of Churchill.

Another copy of verses, written about the same period "in a lady's ivory table-book," are curious, as the first specimen of that peculiar talent which Swift possessed, of ridiculing the vain, frivolous, and commonplace topics of general society.

Meantime, amid the ease of a literary life, and with the prospects which Temple's confirmed friendship appeared to open to him, Swift was imperceptibly laying the foundation for a train of misery, which was to embitter his future years; for it was during his second residence at Moorpark, that he formed his acquaintance with Esther Johnson, better known by the poetical name of Stella. And before entering upon this ominous part of his history, it is necessary to notice some previous circumstances, which have been reserved to this place.

While Swift pursued his studies at Trinity College as a secluded and indigent scholar, his intercourse with female society was probably much limited. On his return to Leicestershire, his mother appears to have had some apprehensions of his forming an imprudent attachment to a young woman of their neighbourhood, fears which Swift himself treats as visionary, in a letter to a friend. As that letter forms a sort of index to the views with which he frequented female society, and to his plans of settling in life, the reader will excuse an abstract. He alludes to his "cold temper, and unconfined humour," as sufficient hindrances to any imprudent attachment. He mentions his resolution not to think of marriage until his fortune was settled in the world, and hints, that, even then, he would be so hard to please, he might probably put it off till doomsday. But he charges these appearances of attachment, which his friend had deemed symptoms of passion, to an active and restless temper, incapable of enduring idleness, and, therefore, catching at such opportunities of amusement as most readily occurred, and frequently seeking and finding it in the sort of insignificant gallantry, which he had used towards the girl in question; a habit, he adds, to be laid aside, whenever he began to take sober reso-

lutions, and which, should he enter the church, he would not find it hard to lay down in the porch. Swift proved unable to keep the promise which, doubtless, he had made to himself, as well as to his friend; and it is probably to a habit, at first indulged merely from vanity, or for the sake of amusement, that we are to trace the well-known circumstances which embittered his life, and impaired his reputation.

His next attachment assumed a more serious complexion. It was contracted in Ireland, and the object was Jane Waryng, the sister of his ancient college companion, whom by a cold poetical conceit he has termed Varina. From the letter which he wrote to that lady, 29th April, 1696, his passion appears to have been deep and serious, with too much of the tragic mood to accord exactly with his account of those petty intrigues, in which

> Cadenus, common forms apart,
> In every scene had kept his heart;
> Had sigh'd and languish'd, vow'd and writ,
> For pastime, or to show his wit.

On the contrary, the letter to Varina proposes, in the most pressing terms, matrimony as a "just and honourable action, which would furnish health to her, and unspeakable happiness to both." It is a pleading of vehemence and exclamation, containing a solemn offer to forego every prospect of interest for the sake of Varina, and a pathetic complaint that her love was more fatal than her cruelty. Another letter, which we find addressed to the same lady, is addressed to Miss Jane Waryng (no longer Varina), and is written in a very different tone from the first. Four years had now elapsed, an interval in which much may have happened to abate the original warmth of Swift's passion; nor is it perhaps very fair, ignorant as we are of what had occurred in the interim, to pass a severe sentence upon his conduct, when, after being mortified by Varina's cruelty during so long a period, he seems to have been a little startled by her sudden offer of capitulation. It is, however, certain that just when the lover, worn out by neglect or disgusted by uncertainty, began to grow cool in his suit, the lady—a case not altogether without example—became pressing and categorical in her inquiries what had altered the style of her admirer's letters. In reply, Swift charges Varina with want of affection, and indifference, states his own income in a most dismal point of view, yet intimates he might well pretend to a better fortune than she was possessed of. He is so far from retaining his former opinion as to the effects of a happy union, that he inquires whether the physicians had got over some scruples they appeared to entertain on the subject of her health. Lastly, he demands peremptorily to know whether she could undertake to manage their domestic affairs, with an income of rather less than three hundred pounds a-year; whether she would engage to follow the methods he should point out for the improvement of her mind; whether she could bend all her affections to the same direction which he should give his own, and so govern her passions,

however justly provoked, as at all times to resume her good humour at his approach; and, finally, whether she could account the place where he resided, more welcome than courts and cities without him? These premises agreed, (as indispensable to please those, who, like himself, were "deeply read in the world"), he intimates his willingness to wed her, though *without* personal beauty or large fortune. It must remain uncertain whether the positive requisites, or the proffered abatements were least acceptable to the lady; but, under all circumstances, she must have been totally divested of pride and delicacy, if she could, upon such terms, have exacted from her reluctant lover, the faith which he seemed so unwilling to plight. Thus separated Swift and Varina. Much, as we have already noticed, may no doubt have happened, in the course of their correspondence, to alter his opinion of that lady, or lead him to imagine that, in delaying a positive answer to his proposals, she was trifling with his passion. But ere she was dismissed from the scene, he had learned to know one with whom much of the good and evil of his future life was to be inseparably blended.

Esther Johnson, who purchased, by a life of prolonged hopes and disappointed affection, a poetical immortality under the name of Stella, became first known to Swift during his second residence with Sir William Temple. The birth of Stella has been carefully investigated, with the hopes of discovering something that might render a mysterious and romantic history yet more romantic. But there are no sound reasons for supposing that she had other parents than her reputed father and mother, the former the younger brother of a good family in Nottinghamshire, and by profession a merchant in London, —the latter a woman of acute and penetrating talents, the friend and companion of Lady Gifford, Temple's favourite sister, and cherished by her with particular respect and regard until the end of her life. Johnson, the father, died soon after Stella's birth, but Mrs. Johnson and her two daughters were inmates of Moorpark for several years. General interest was taken by all the inhabitants of this mansion, in the progress which little Hetty made in her education. And much of the task of instruction devolved upon Swift, now a man of thirty, who seems to have, for some time, regarded his lovely pupil with the friendship of an elder brother.* But the constant and habitual intercourse of affectionate confidence between the master and the pupil, by degrees assumed a more tender complexion; and it will be presently seen, that when fortune appeared disposed to separate them, they

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* He taught her even the most ordinary parts of education, and, in particular, instructed her in the art of writing. Their hands resemble each other in some peculiarities. But though he instructed her in the necessary branches of education, there is evidence he went no farther, and that Stella, far from being a learned lady, was really deficient in many of the most ordinary points of information. The editor is possessed of an exact transcript of marginal notes, written by Swift for elucidation of an edition of Milton, 1669, which is inscribed, "The gift of Dr. Jonathan Swift to Mrs. Dingley and Mrs. Johnson, May, 1703." The

were both unwilling to submit to her dictates. There is little doubt, that the feelings which attended this new connexion, must have had weight in disposing Swift to break off the lingering and cold courtship which he had maintained with Mrs. Jane Waryng. And from this period, the fates of Swift and Stella were so implicated together, as to produce the most remarkable incidents of both their lives.

Four years of quiet and happy residence at Moorpark were terminated by the death of Sir William Temple, in 1698-9. He was not unmindful of Swift's generous and disinterested friendship, which he rewarded by a pecuniary legacy, and with what he, doubtless, regarded as of much greater consequence, the bequest of his literary remains. These, considering the author's high reputation and numerous friends, held forth to his literary executor an opportunity of coming before the public, in a manner that should excite at once interest and respect. And when it is considered, that all Swift's plans revolved upon making himself eminent as an author, the value of such an occasion to distinguish himself could scarcely be too highly estimated.

The experiment, however, appeared at first to have in a great measure disappointed these reasonable expectations. The works of Temple were carefully edited, with a dedication to King William; and at the same time a petition was presented for Swift, reminding his Majesty of a promise made to Sir William Temple, to bestow on him a prebend of Canterbury or Westminster. Swift has expressed his belief, that the Earl of Romney, who promised to second this petition, did in reality suppress it; and William, when he ceased to reap the benefit of Temple's political experience, was not likely to interest himself deeply in his posthumous literary labours. After long attendance upon court, therefore, Swift's hopes of promotion disappeared, and the revolution principles, which he certainly strongly professed, did not prevent his regarding King William, and his memory, with very little complacence.

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notes are numerous, but the information which they convey is such as could only be useful to persons of a very indifferent education. Thus, Palestine is explained to be the Holy-Land, Rhene and Danau, two German rivers, Pilasters are rendered pillars, Alcides, Hercules; Columbus is designated as he "who discovered America," and Xerxes as having "made a bridge with ships over the Hellespont." It does not seem likely that Swift would have taken all this trouble merely for the illumination of Mrs. Dingley, and the inference plainly must be, that Stella was neither well informed nor well educated.

BATTERSEA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

CHAPTER II.

Swift goes to Ireland with Lord Berkeley—His differences with that nobleman—Obtains the living of Laracor—He is displeased with his sister's marriage—His mode of life at Laracor—Mrs. Dingley and Stella come to Ireland—Tisdal makes proposals of marriage to Stella—Swift embarks in politics—His opinion of the affairs of church and state—"Tale of a Tub."

SWIFT, now in the prime of life, and well known both to the great and learned, could not long want an honourable provision, and accordingly received and accepted an invitation to attend the Earl of Berkeley, one of the Lords Justices of Ireland, to that country, in the capacity of chaplain and private secretary. But these plurality of offices gave umbrage to a Mr. Bushe, who had pitched upon the latter situation for himself, and who contrived, under pretence of its incompatibility with the character of a clergyman, to have Swift superseded in his own favour. Lord Berkeley "with a poor apology," promised to make his chaplain amends, by giving him the first good church-living that should become vacant. But neither in this did he keep his word: for, when the rich Deanery of Derry was in his gift, Bushe entered into a negotiation to sell it for a bribe of a thousand pounds, and would only consent to give Swift the preference, upon his paying a like sum. Incensed alike at the secretary and his principal, whom he supposed to be accessory to this unworthy conduct, Swift returned the succinct answer, "God confound you both for a couple of scoundrels," and instantly left Lord Berkeley's lodgings in the castle. He had already given vent to his resentment in one or two keen personal satires; and his patron, alarmed for the consequences of an absolute breach with a man of his temper and talents, was glad to reconcile, or at least to pacify him, by presenting him with the rectory of Agher, and the vicarages of Laracor and Rathbeggan. These livings united, though far inferior in value to the Deanery of Derry, formed yet a certain and competent fund of subsistence, amounting to about 230*l.* yearly. The Prebend of Dunlavin being added in the year 1700, raised Swift's income to betwixt 350*l.* and 400*l.*, which was its amount until he was preferred to the Deanery of St. Patrick's. These facts are ascertained from his account-books for the years 1701 and 1702, which evince, on the one hand, the remarkable economy with which Swift managed this moderate income, and on the other, that, of the expenses which he permitted himself, more than one-tenth part was incurred in acts of liberality and benevolence.*

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* Account of expenses from Nov. 1, 1700, to Nov. 1, 1701.

Articles per Account,	£	*s.*	*d.*
Shoes and books, ...	3	0	0
A servant's wages, &c.	7	0	0
Carried over, ...	£10	0	0

Swift's quarrel with Lord Berkeley did not disturb his intercourse with the rest of the family, in which he retained his situation of chaplain. Lady Berkeley stood high in his opinion as an amiable and virtuous woman, in whom the most easy and polite conversation, joined with the truest piety, might be observed united to as much advantage as ever they were seen apart in any other persons. The company also, of two amiable and lively young ladies of fashion, daughters of the earl, must have rendered the society still more fascinating; and, accordingly it is during his residence with Lord Berkeley, that Swift appears first to have given way to the playfulness of his disposition in numerous poetical *jeux d'esprit*, which no poet ever composed with the same felicity and spirit. Of this class are the inimitable petition of Mrs. Frances Harris, the verses on Miss Floyd, a young lady of beauty and spirit, who was also an inmate of the family, and some other pieces, written during this period. But the most solemn waggery was the Meditation on a Broomstick, composed and read with infinite gravity, as an existing portion of the Honourable Mr. Boyle's Meditations, which, it seems, Lady Berkeley used to request Swift to read aloud more frequently than was agreeable to him. In such company, and with such amusements, his time glided happily away, and he retained a high regard for the ladies of the family during the rest of his life. Lady Betty Berkeley, in particular, afterwards Lady Betty Germaine, was to the end of his career one of his most valuable and most valued correspondents.

During this period of Swift's life, his sister contracted an imprudent marriage with a person called Fenton, to his very high and avowed displeasure, which, Lord Orrery has informed us, was solely owing to his ambition being outraged at her matching with a tradesman. This, however, was by no means the case. Fenton was a worthless character, and upon the eve of bankruptcy, when Swift's sister, against his warm remonstrances, chose to unite her fate to his. And although he retained his resentment against her imprudence, Lord Orrery ought not to have omitted, that, out of his own moderate income, Swift allowed Mrs. Fenton what was adequate to her com-

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Brought over,	£10	0	0
Washing, &c.	4	0	0
Linen,	5	0	0
Clothes,	13	0	0
Journeys,	10	0	0
J. B.	5	0	0
Accidents,	5	0	0
Horse,	12	0	0
Letters,	1	10	0
Play,	5	0	0
Gifts and charity extraordinary,	10	0	0
Charity common,	2	10	0
Expenses common,	17	0	0
	£100	0	0

fortable support, amid the ruin in which that imprudence had involved her.

Having now taken leave of Lord Berkeley's family, at least as resident chaplain, Swift, in the year 1700, took possession of his living at Laracor, and resumed the habits of a country clergyman. He is said to have walked down, *incognito*, to the place of his future residence; and tradition has recorded various anecdotes of his journey. He walked straight to the curate's house, demanded his name, and announced himself bluntly "as his master." All was bustle to receive a person of such consequence, and who, apparently, was determined to make his importance felt.* The curate's wife was ordered to lay aside the doctor's only clean shirt and stockings, which he carried in his pocket; nor did Swift relax his airs of domination until he had excited much alarm, which his subsequent kind and friendly conduct to the worthy couple turned into respectful attachment. This was the ruling trait of Swift's conduct to others; his praise assumed the appearance and language of complaint; his benefits were often preceded by a prologue of a threatening nature; his most grave themes were blended with ironical pleasantry, and, in those of a lighter nature, deep and bitter satire is often couched under the most trifling levity.

Swift's life at Laracor was regular and clerical. He read prayers twice a week, and regularly preached upon the Sunday. Upon the former occasions the church was thinly attended; and it is said, that the ludicrous and irreverend anecdote of his addressing the church service to his parish clerk, occurred when he found the rest of the congregation absent upon such an occasion. The truth of the story has been, however, disputed, although the friends of Swift allow that it had much of the peculiarity of his vein of humour. The reader will find beneath, the reasoning of Mr. Theophilus Swift upon this curious anecdote, to which there can be but one objection, that Swift, namely, was more likely to do such a thing, than Orrery to invent it; and that to Swift, notwithstanding his sincere piety, a jest was irresistibly seductive.† On Sundays the church at Laracor was well attended by

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* His mode of introducing himself was often whimsical and alarming. The widow of Mr. Watson, a miniature-painter in Dublin, who, herself, followed the same profession, used to mention, that, while a girl in her father's house, (a Mr. Hoy, of the county of Wicklow,) a gentleman rode up to the door, was admitted to the parlour where the family were sitting, and held some conversation with Mr. Hoy, probably upon a literary topic, as her father left the room to seek a book referred to. During his absence, the stranger, stealing softly behind her, gave her a smart and unexpected slap on the cheek, saying, at the same time, to the astonished girl, "You will now remember Dean Swift as long as you live;" in which he prophesied very truly. Even in hiring servants, it was his custom to begin by asking them their qualifications for discharging the lowest and most mortifying offices. If they answered saucily, or expressed themselves affronted, the treaty was ended; if not, he set their submissive replies to the account of their good sense, and usually engaged them.

† "I perfectly recollect, that neither my father or Mrs. Whiteway had ever heard the story of 'Dearly beloved Roger,' till Orrery's book made its appearance. I

the neighbouring families; and Swift, far from having reason to complain of want of an audience, attained that reputation which he pronounced to be the height of his ambition, since inquiries were frequently made at his faithful clerk, Roger Coxe,* whether the Doctor was to preach that Sunday.

While resident at Laracor, it was Swift's principal care to repair the dilapidations which the church and vicarage had sustained, by the carelessness or avarice of former incumbents. He expressed the utmost indignation at the appearance of the church; and, during the first year of his incumbency, expended a considerable sum in putting it into decent repair. The vicarage he also made comfortably tenantable, and proceeded to improve it, according to the ideas of beauty and taste which were at that time universally received. He formed a pleasant garden; smoothed the banks of a rivulet into a canal, and planted willows in regular ranks by its side. These willows, so often celebrated in the Journal to Stella, are now decayed or cut down; the garden cannot be traced; and the canal only resembles a ditch. Yet the parish and the rector continue to derive some advantage from its having been once the abode of Swift. He increased the glebe from one acre to twenty. The tithes of Effernock, purchased with his own money, at a time when it did not abound, were by his will settled for ever on the incumbent of that living.†

But Laracor had yet greater charms than its willows and canals, the facetious humours of Roger Coxe, and the applause of the gentry of the neighbourhood. Swift had no sooner found his fortune established in Ireland, than it became his wish that Stella should be an inhabitant of that kingdom. This was easily arranged. She was her own mistress, and the rate of interest being higher in Ireland, furnished her with a plausible excuse for taking up her residence near the friend and instructor of her youth. The company of Mrs. Dingley, a woman

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have frequently heard them say so. They allowed it was possible, and not unlike the Dean; but they believed it an invention of Orrery's, to discredit the Dean's respect for religion. They thought it very singular that such a circumstance, had it been true, should not have been known to them; especially as my father had a considerable estate near Laracor, and resided very much upon it. For myself, I give no credit to the story. I verily believe that Orrery applied a story he had found, to discredit the piety of the Dean." Mr. Swift afterwards found the same story, in the same words, in an old jest book, printed betwixt 1655 and 1660.

* Roger was a man of humour, and merited a master like Swift. When the Doctor remarked that he wore a scarlet waistcoat, he defended himself as being of the church-militant. "Will you not bid for these poultry?" said Swift to his humble dependent, at a sale of farm-stock. "No, sir;" said Roger, "they're just a-going to *Hatch*." They were, in fact, on the point of being knocked down to a farmer called Hatch. This humorist was originally a hatter, and died at the age of ninety, at Bruky, in the county of Cavan.

† This was not without a touch of his peculiar humour. These tithes, by his will, are devised to his successors in the cure, so long as the Established Church lasted; and to the poor, in case it should be exchanged for any other form of the Christian religion, always excepting from the benefit thereof, Jews, Atheists, and Infidels.

of narrow income and limited understanding, but of middle age, and a creditable character, obviated, in a great measure, the inferences which the world must otherwise have necessarily drawn from this step. Some whispers so singular a resolution doubtless occasioned; but the caution of Swift, who was never known to see Stella but in presence of a third party, and the constant attendance of Mrs. Dingley, to whom, apparently, he paid equal attention, seemed to have put scandal to silence. Their residence was varied with the same anxious regard to Stella's character. When Swift left his parsonage at Laracor, the ladies became his tenants; and when he returned, they regularly retired to their lodgings in the town of Trim, the capital of the diocese, or were received by Dr. Raymond, so often mentioned in the Journal, the hospitable vicar of that parish. Every exterior circumstance which could distinguish an union of mere friendship from one of a more tender nature, was carefully observed, and the surprise at first excited by the settlement of Mrs. Dingley and Stella in a country to which they were strangers, seems gradually to have subsided. It is, however, highly prcbable, that between Swift and Stella there was a tacit understanding that their union was to be completed by marriage, when Swift's income, according to the prudential scheme which he had unhappily adopted, should be adequate to the expense of a matrimonial establishment. And here it is impossible to avoid remarking the vanity of that over prudence, which labours to provide against all possible contingencies. Had Swift, like any ordinary man in his situation, been contented to share his limited income with a deserving object of his affections, the task of his biographers would have been short and cheerful; and we should neither have had to record, nor apologize for, those circumstances which form the most plausible charge against his memory. In the pride of talent and of wisdom, he endeavoured to frame a new path to happiness; and the consequences have rendered him a warning, where the various virtues with which he was endowed, ought to have made him a pattern.

Meanwhile, the risk of ill construction being so carefully guarded against, Stella with her beauty and accomplishments was not long without an admirer. She was then about eighteen, her hair of a raven black, her features both beautiful and expressive, and her form of perfect symmetry, though rather inclined to embonpoint. To those outward graces were added good sense, great docility, and uncommon powers both of grave and gay conversation, and a fortune, which, though small, was independent. It is not surprising, therefore, that she should have received an offer of marriage from the Reverend Dr. William Tisdal, a clergyman of talents and respectability, with whom Swift lived upon a familiar and friendly footing. The proposals of the lover were made to Swift, as the lady's guardian, by whose wishes and advice she was determined to be guided; and thus he was apparently reduced either to the necessity of stating his own pretensions to Stella's hand, or of resigning her to a rival. Mr. Deane Swift has here frankly explained and condemned the conduct of his kinsman

which Mr. Sheridan, perhaps for that very reason, has laboured to colour over and justify. According to the former, Swift insisted upon such unreasonable terms for Stella's maintenance and provision, in case of widowhood, that Tisdal was unable to accede to them. Sheridan, on the other hand, assures us, that the refusal came finally from the young lady herself, who, though she showed at first no repugnance to Tisdal's proposal, perhaps with a view to sound Swift's sentiments, yet could not at length prevail upon herself to abandon the hope of being united to him. Tisdal himself suspected Swift did not warmly befriend his suit, as is evident from a letter, dated 20th April, 1704, in which the latter endeavours, somewhat imperfectly, to justify himself from such an accusation. For considering his express admission, that if his fortune and humour permitted him to think of matrimony, among all persons on earth Stella should be his choice; and considering the close and intimate union which had so long subsisted between them, it requires strong faith to put implicit credit in Swift's next assertion, that so strong a predilection never operated as an impediment to Tisdal's courtship. Nor is it in nature to suppose that he should have been indifferent to the thoughts of one "whom he loved better than his life, a thousand million of times,"* passing into the possession of another. It is also remarkable, that when Tisdal is mentioned in the Journal to Stella, it is always with a slight or sneer, and frequently with allusion to some disgusting imperfection. Yet no open breach took place between the rivals, if we may term them so, for they continued to maintain occasional intercourse down to the year 1740, when Tisdal witnesses the Dean's last will.

From the time that she finally rejected Tisdal's addresses, Stella appears to have considered her destiny as united to that of Swift. She encouraged no other admirer, and never left Ireland, excepting for a visit of five or six months to England, in 1705.

But love or friendship, with its pleasures and embarrassments, were insufficient to occupy Swift's active mind and aspiring disposition. As the élève of Sir William Temple, he had been carefully instructed in the principles of the English constitution; as a clergyman of the church of England, he was zealous for the maintenance of her rights and her power. These were the leading principles which governed him through life; nor will it be difficult to show, that he uniformly acted up to them, unless in addressing those who confound principle with party, and deem that consistence can only be claimed by such as, with blindfold and indiscriminating attachment, follow the banners and leaders of a particular denomination of politicians. Swift, on the contrary, as he carried into the ranks of the Whigs the opinions and scruples of a high-church clergyman, joined, in like manner, the standard of Harley with those sentiments of liberty, and that hatred of arbitrary power, which became the pupil of Sir William Temple. Such a distinction between opinions in church and state has not fre-

* This and similar expressions occur in the Journal.

quently existed, the high-churchmen being usually Tories, and the low-church divines universally Whigs. But in Swift's mind the distinction did exist, and however it might embarrass his political conduct, nothing can be more certain than that he early drew the line, and constantly adhered to it. Even while residing with Sir William Temple, he judged the constancy of Archbishop Sancroft, who refused the oaths to William and Mary, worthy to be celebrated in an ode; while, at the same time, as far as can be safely argued from the Pindaric obscurity of the following stanzas, the poet gave his full approbation to the measure which placed those princes on the throne, so far as it was only a revolution of state:

Necessity, thou tyrant conscience of the great,
Say, why the church is still led blindfold by the state;
  Why should the first be ruin'd and laid waste
  To mend dilapidations in the last?
And yet the world, whose eyes are on our mighty prince,
    Thinks Heaven has cancelled all our sins,
And that his subjects share his happy influence;
Follow the model close, for so I'm sure they should,
But wicked kings draw more examples than the good.

With sentiments thus differing from the Whigs in church affairs, and in temporal matters from the Tories, Swift was now about to assume the character of a political author. The period was the year 1701, when Lords Somers, Oxford, Halifax, and Portland, were impeached by the House of Commons, on account of their share in the partition-treaty. Swift, who beheld the violence of these proceedings with real apprehension, founded his remonstrance to the public upon the experience to be derived from the history of the civil discords in Athens and Rome, where the noblest citizens, and those who had best deserved of the republic, fell successive victims to popular odium, until liberty itself, after degenerating into licence, was extinguished by tyranny. This discourse on the contests and dissensions between the nobles and commons in Athens and Rome, excited much attention. It was ascribed for some time to Lord Somers, and afterwards to Bishop Burnet, who was compelled to disown it publicly, in order to avoid the resentment of the House of Commons. Swift, who was probably in London at the time of publication, had again returned to Ireland, and, in a dispute with the Bishop of Kilmore, who twice told him he was a *young man*, when he pretended to deny that Burnet had written the pamphlet, he was induced to mortify his antagonist by owning the publication. Upon his return to England, in 1702, there no longer remained the same prudential reasons for secresy; and Swift, without hesitation, avowed himself the author of this popular tract, and became at once intimate with Somers and Halifax, and with the Earl of Sunderland, to whom he had been formerly known.

If we can trust Swift's own averment, he made, upon this occasion, a free and candid avowal of his principles, both in church and state, declaring himself in the former to be a high-church man, and in the

latter a Whig; a declaration which both Lord Halifax and Somers called to mind years afterwards, at the time of Lord Godolphin's removal from office.

Thus wore on what may be considered as the happiest term of Swift's life, which was passed in the society of Stella, and the retreat to his willows at Laracor, varied by frequent excursions to England,* and a ready reception into the society of the great and of the learned. It was then he formed that invaluable acquaintance with Addison, which party-spirit afterwards cooled, though it could not extinguish, with Steele, with Arbuthnot, and with the other wits of the age, who used to assemble at Button's coffee-house. Of the commencement of this intercourse, Sheridan has given a characteristic and whimsical account.† It was cemented by the appearance of that celebrated work, the "Tale of a Tub," which was first published in 1704.

This celebrated production is founded upon a simple and obvious allegory, conducted with all the humour of Rabelais, and without his extravagance. The main purpose is to trace the gradual corruptions of the Church of Rome, and to exalt the English reformed church at the expense both of the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian establishments. It was written with a view to the interests of the high-church party, and it succeeded in rendering them the most important services; for what is so important to a party in Britain, whether in church or state, as to gain the laughers to their side? But the raillery was considered, not unreasonably, as too light for a subject of such grave importance; and it cannot be denied, that the luxuriance of Swift's wit has, in some parts of the Tale, carried him much beyond the bounds of propriety. Many of the graver clergy, even among the Tories, and particularly Dr. Sharpe, the Archbishop of York, were highly scandalized at the freedom of the satire; nor is there any doubt that the offence thus occasioned, proved the real bar to Swift's attaining the highest

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* From Swift's Journal these visits appear to have occurred at least once yearly.

† Though the greatness of Swift's talents was known to many in private life, and his company and conversation much sought after and admired, yet was his name hitherto little known in the republic of letters. The only pieces which he had then published, were "The Battle of the Books," and "The Contests and Dissensions in Athens and Rome," and both without a name. Nor was he personally known to any of the wits of the age, excepting Mr. Congreve, and one or two more, with whom he had contracted an acquaintance at Sir William Temple's. The knot of wits used at this time to assemble at Button's coffee-house; and I had a singular account of Swift's first appearance there from Ambrose Philips, who was one of Mr. Addison's little senate. He said that they had for several successive days observed a strange clergyman come into the coffeehouse, who seemed utterly unacquainted with any of those who frequented it; and whose custom it was to lay his hat down on a table, and walk backward and forward at a good pace for half an hour or an hour, without speaking to any mortal, or seeming in the least to attend to anything that was going forward there. He then used to take up his hat, pay his money at the bar, and walk away without opening his lips. After having observed this singular behaviour for some time, they concluded him to be out of his senses;

dignities in the church. King and Wotton, in their answers to the Tale, insisted largely upon the inconsistence between the bold and even profane turn of the satire, and the clerical character of the reputed author. For similar reasons, the "Tale of a Tub" was hailed by the infidel philosophers on the Continent, as a work well calculated to advance the cause of scepticism; and, as such, was recommended by Voltaire to his proselytes, because the ludicrous combinations which are formed in the mind by the perusal, tend to lower the respect due to revelation. Swift's attachment to the real interests of religion are so well known, that he would doubtless rather have burned his manuscript, than incurred the slightest risk of injuring them. But the indirect consequences of ridicule, when applied to subjects of sacred importance, are more extensive, and more prejudicial than can be calculated by the author, who, with his eye fixed on the main purpose of his satire, is apt to overlook its more remote effects.

The "Tale of a Tub" had for some years attracted the notice of the public, when Dr. Thomas Swift, already mentioned as Swift's relation and fellow student at Trinity College, set up pretensions to a share in that humorous composition. These he promulgated, in what he was pleased to entitle, "A Complete Key to the Tale of a Tub," printed in 1710, containing a flimsy explanation of the prominent points of the allegory, and averring the author to be "Thomas Swift, grandson to Sir William Davenant, and Jonathan Swift, cousin-german to Thomas Swift, both retainers to Sir William Temple." *Our* Swift, it may be easily imagined, was not greatly pleased by an arrangement, in which his cousin is distinguished as a wit, and an author by descent, and he himself only introduced as his relative; and still less could he endure his arrogating the principal share of the composition, and the corresponding insinuation, that the work had suffered by his cousin Jonathan's inability to support the original plan. The real author, who, at the time the Key appeared, was busied in revising a new

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and the name that he went by among them, was that of "the mad parson." This made them more than usually attentive to his motions; and one evening, as Mr. Addison and the rest were observing him, they saw him cast his eyes several times on a gentleman in boots, who seemed to be just come out of the country, and at last advanced toward him as intending to address him. They were all eager to hear what this dumb mad parson had to say, and immediately quitted their seats to get near him. Swift went up to the country gentleman, and in a very abrupt manner, without any previous salute, asked him, "Pray, sir, do you remember any good weather in the world?" The country gentleman, after staring a little at the singularity of his manner, and the oddity of the question, answered, "Yes, sir, I thank God, I remember a great deal of good weather in my time."—"That is more," said Swift, "than I can say; I never remember any weather that was not too hot, or too cold; too wet or too dry; but however God Almighty contrives it, at the end of the year 'tis all very well." Upon saying this, he took up his hat, and without uttering a syllable more, or taking the least notice of any one, walked out of the coffee-house; leaving all those who had been spectators of this odd scene staring after him, and still more confirmed in the opinion of his being mad.—*Sheridan's Life of Swift.*

edition of the book, wrote a letter to his bookseller, Benjamin Tooke, sufficiently expressive of his feelings. "I have just now your last, with the complete Key. I believe it so perfect a Grub-Street piece, it will be forgotten in a week. But it is strange that there can be no satisfaction against a bookseller for publishing names in so bold a manner. I wish some lawyer could advise you how I might have satisfaction; for at this rate there is no book, however vile, which may not be fastened on me. I cannot but think that little parson-cousin of mine is at the bottom of this; for having lent him a copy of some part of it, &c., and, he showing it, after I was gone for Ireland, and the thing abroad, he affected to talk suspiciously, as if he had some share in it. If he should happen to be in town, and you light on him, I think you ought to tell him gravely, 'That, if he be the author, he should set his name to the,' &c., and rally him a little upon it; and tell him, 'if he can explain some things, you will, if he pleases, set his name to the next edition.' I should be glad to see how far the foolish impudence of a dunce would go."

After all, as there is seldom any falsehood without some slight tincture of sophisticated truth, it is possible that Swift, who was neither a polemical divine nor a logician, may have used his parson-cousin's accomplishments in these sciences, to save him some labour and research, and on such communication the conceited pedant may have rested his claim to a share in composing this satirical masterpiece. But, although Swift resented his cousin's presumption, he was himself far from openly avowing the production. From Tooke the bookseller, to whom he was transmitting the additions made in the edition 1711, it was, of course, impossible to conceal it; and Faulkner pretended, that in the latter part of Swift's life, he owned it to him also, in direct terms. But, as the Dean maintained the strictest reserve upon the subject with his intimate friends, it can scarce be supposed he should be unnecessarily communicative to a person in Faulkner's situation. The following anecdote may be depended upon. Mrs. Whiteway observed the Dean, in the latter years of his life, looking over the Tale, when suddenly closing the book, he muttered, in an unconscious soliloquy, "Good God! what a genius I had when I wrote that book!" —an exclamation which resembles that of Marlborough, in a similar declension of faculties, when, gazing on his own portrait, he uttered the pathetic reflection, "That was once a man." Mrs. Whiteway begged the volume of the Dean, who made some excuse at the moment, but, on recurrence of her birthday, he presented her with the book, inscribed, "From her affectionate cousin." On observing the inscription, she ventured to say, "I wish, sir, you had said, 'the gift of the author.'" The Dean bowed, smiled good-humouredly, and answered, "No, I thank you," in a very significant manner.*

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* This anecdote is given on the authority of Mr. Theophilus Swift. The volume was in Mr. T. Swift's possession till very lately. The Dean had corrected, with his pen, all the abbreviations and elisions which were ordinary in the beginning of

Notwithstanding the silence of the real author, and the usurped title of Dr. Thomas Swift, no one appears to have entertained any doubt upon the subject: and the society of the vicar of Laracor was assiduously cultivated by men of the first distinction for birth and talents. Of its effect in this respect, Swift was himself sufficiently conscious, and points it out to Stella, though with the ambiguity he generally used in writing concerning his own publications, as the source of his favourable reception with Lord Oxford's ministry. "They may talk of the *you know what*, but Gad, if it had not been for that, I should never have been able to get the success I have had; and if that helps me to succeed, then that *same thing* will be serviceable to the church." But long before high-churchmen acknowledged its merit, the author of this extraordinary performance had been caressed by those of the opposite party, with whom he coincided in temporal, though not in ecclesiastical politics. These were Lord Somers, Lord Halifax, the Earl of Pembroke, and Bishop Burnet, among the statesmen; and among the learned and witty, Addison, Steele, Philips, Anthony Henley,* and Tickle.

Among the friendships thus acquired, the love and intimacy of Addison were particularly valued by Swift; and when they spent their hours together, they never wished for the entrance of a third person. A copy of Addison's travels presented by him to our author, is inscribed "To Doctor Jonathan Swift, the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age, this book is presented by his most humble servant, the author." Nor was Swift backward in expressing similar sentiments towards his distinguished contemporary. He mentions him repeatedly in his correspondence, as a most excellent person, and his own most intimate friend. It is painful to reflect that friendship between two men of such eminent talents should have been chilled by their difference in political opinions. But the placid and gentle temper of Addison appears to have avoided those extremities which took place between Swift and Steele, and thus there was an opening for the revival of their intercourse at a subsequent period, a circumstance hitherto unnoticed by Swift's biographers.

The powers which had acquired for Swift these friends and this station in society, were taxed for the support and extent of his fame. He appears to have designed, about this time, to engage in the contro-

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the century, by replacing *it is* for *'tis*, *the end* for *th' end*, and the like, but without any other alterations. On the blank leaf was written, "To Mrs. Martha Whiteway, a present on her birth-day, May 29, 1735, from her affectionate cousin, JONATH. SWIFT."

* The proprietor of the Grange in Hampshire, to whom Garth dedicated the "Dispensary." Several of his letters occur in the early part of Swift's correspondence. He was a man of great wit and humour, and was distinguished as the author of a letter to the *Tatler*, under the character of old Downes the prompter, in which he ridicules the administration which was just formed by the Earl of Oxford, under the allegory of a change of managers at the theatre.

versy concerning the deistical opinions expressed in Dr. Tyndal's "Rights of the Christian Church," and had collected materials for a severe and scalping answer to that once famous publication. Swift was afterwards not unwilling to have it thought that these remarks (which were never finished) were not only levelled against the opinions of infidels and latitudinarians, but involved an indirect attack upon the state Whigs, among whom these latitudinarians chiefly sheltered their heretical opinions. But he has at this period recorded himself, in the conclusion of his verses to Ardelia, as a " Whig, and one who wears a gown ;" a memorable line, expressive that the principles which then ruled his mind, were an attachment to the liberties of his country in state politics, and to the rights of his order in those of the church. These points, however reconcilable in themselves, were, in general estimation, usually regarded as in opposition to each other; a high-church Whig was a political character of which all parties refused to recognise the existence. Swift saw and felt the difficulty of preserving consistency in the eyes of the public, and busied himself, according to his own account, with projects for the uniting of parties, which he perfected over night, and destroyed in the morning. One tract, however, the " Sentiments of a Church of England Man, with respect to Religion, and Government," escaped this condemnation, and was published in 1708. It contains a statement concerning the national religious establishment, fair, temperate, and manly, unless where it may be thought too strongly to favour the penal laws against non-conformity. In civil politics, the revolution principles are strongly advocated; and the final conclusion is that, "in order to preserve the constitution entire in church and state, whoever has a true value for both, would be sure to avoid the extremes of Whig, for the sake of the former, and the extremes of Tory, on account of the latter." But moderation in politics, however reasonable in itself, and though recommended by the powers of Swift, has been always too cold for the temper of the English nation. All that they could or would understand from the sentiment above expressed, was, that the author was disposed to leave the political party with which he had hitherto acted, and was anticipating an apology for uniting with the Tories. And these suspicions were confirmed in the eyes of the party which entertained them, when he published, in 1708-9, the "Letter upon the Sacramental Test," opposing, by every argument of reason and ridicule, which his prompt imagination could supply, any relaxation of this important legal disability. The author, indeed, for some time remained unknown ; and Swift, in a letter to Archbishop King, even affects to complain of the misrepresentation which he himself undergoes in that celebrated tract. But the world was not long deceived. The chaplain of Lord Wharton, and others, soon discovered the real author; and to this circumstance he traces the commencement of the coolness betwixt him and his friends of the Whig party.

Meanwhile Swift displayed his zeal for the interest of the church of England, by his actions, as well as by his writings. Queen Anne,

upon the motion, it is said, of Bishop Burnet, had made, in 1703-4, a grant of the first-fruits and tenths,* to augment the maintenance of the poor clergy of England. The clergy of Ireland were naturally desirous to obtain the same boon; but hitherto their various applications had been rejected. In 1708, Swift, who had been an active member of the Irish convocation in the preceding year, was employed by Archbishop King, and the rest of the Irish prelacy, to solicit the remission of the first-fruits. He made his application to Lord Godolphin, by the encouragement of Lord Sunderland, Lord Somers, Mr. Southwell, and other leading members among the ministry. But it was ineffectual. The grant of the first-fruits and tenths in England, had not been attended with the expected consequences of reconciling the clergy to the ministers, by whom the favour was bestowed, and the lord treasurer showed little inclination to repeat so expensive an experiment. Yet he intimated to Swift, that the grant *might* be obtained, on condition the Irish clergy were disposed to make such acknowledgments "as they ought;" or; as he reluctantly explained the phrase, better acknowledgments than had been made by the church of England. Swift's inference was that Godolphin suspected the clergy to be *Tories* in the English sense, that is, hostile to the revolution and settlement of the crown; a prepossession which rendered his commission desperate. And though he afterwards was put into better hopes by Lord Pembroke, yet his first opinion proved just, and nothing was done in the matter till the administration of Harley. While acting as solicitor in this business, Swift appears, from his correspondence, to have resided in England from February, 1707-8, until the end of April, 1709.

During his residence at London, Swift was not altogether negligent of his own interest. Considering himself as useless in Ireland, "in a parish with an audience of half a score," he was willing to have accepted the office of secretary of embassy, had Lord Berkeley gone as ambassador to Vienna. But this purpose was disappointed by Lord Berkeley's age and infirmities, which did not permit him to undertake the office. There was also a plan suggested, perhaps by Colonel Hunter, governor of Virginia, to send out Dr. Swift as bishop of that province, to exercise a sort of metropolitan authority over the colonial clergy. But neither did this appointment take place. Thus disappointed, Swift was still entitled to look for preferment, through the interest of those powerful persons who had professed themselves his friends, and who, about this time, had themselves received promotion.

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* This was a tax imposed originally upon church-livings, for maintenance of the crusade: it continued to be levied as a branch of the papal revenue, until the time of Henry VIII., when it was seized upon by that monarch, and settled by Parliament as a part of the income of the crown for ever. The tenths averaged near 11,000*l.* yearly; and the first-fruits about 5,000*l.* This fund, though so considerable, was never applied to any national purpose, but usually employed to gratify the court-favourites of the day.

Lord Pembroke was named high admiral, Lord Somers president of the council, and Lord Wharton lord-lieutenant of Ireland, with whom Addison went over as secretary. Some hopes, accordingly, Swift seems to have entertained: for he takes the pains about this time to assure Archbishop King, that no preferment which he might receive from the government should lead him to flinch in his attachment to the interests of the established church. From a letter to Addison also, to be quoted in the next chapter, it seems that Swift expected, either the prebendary of Dr. South, then supposed to be dying, for which Halifax deeply pledges his interest, or some such sinecure as the post of historiographer. But it is one thing to expect promotion on fair and honourable terms, and another to supplicate for it in a mean and abject manner. And to suppose, as has been insinuated by one writer, that Swift mendicated from Lord Somers a recommendation to Lord Wharton, to be his chaplain, and that his subsequent union with the Tories, was owing to Wharton's scornful refusal to countenance a fellow of no character, would require very different proof from the assertion of an individual, that he had seen letters, which in his opinion warranted the conclusion. The allegation which charges such a character with meanness and servility, inconsistent with the whole tenor of his life, requires better evidence than a reference to vouchers, neither quoted nor produced; for there are few who will not rather believe the reporter to have been misguided by prejudice, or mistaken in judgment, than that Swift should, in this instance, have departed from the proud and stern tone of independence, which rejected the patronage of Temple in his youth, and vindicated in his age the liberties of Ireland. Swift himself, indeed, informs us, that Lord Somers pressed upon him a letter to be carried by him to the Earl of Wharton, which he long declined to receive, and for some time delayed to deliver, and that, when he did deliver it, no consequence followed in his favour. Thus far, therefore, parties are at one; and it only remains to inquire, whether the favour of Lord Somers's intercession was asked with servility, or so granted, that, notwithstanding its proving totally ineffectual, the circumstance of its existence is sufficient to fix the brand of ingratitude upon Swift's character, for the reflections he has cast upon Lord Somers in the *Examiner*. On the first point, the reader may look at a letter of Lord Halifax, on the subject of Swift's promotion in the church, and consider whether the individual, whose lack of preferment is stated by that nobleman to be a shame to himself and his whole party, and who is there expressly promised the survivance of Dr. South's prebendary, was likely to have occasion to apply to Lord Somers in the degrading manner which Dr. Salter has intimated. Whether Swift acted justly in doubting the sincerity of Lord Somers, we have no means of determining; but we know that his lordship's intercession was totally ineffectual; and that is a circumstance which seems strange, if it were indeed as earnest as Dr. Salter informs us. That Swift should have expected the chaplaincy from Lord Wharton, through the mediation of Lord Somers, argues no

unreasonable confidence in the friendship of that great statesman, who had sought him out, and courted his company; and that, when disappointed of those hopes, he was angry both with Somers and Wharton, and considered it as owing to a juggle betwixt them, only proves, that, like the rest of mankind, he was irritated by disappointment, and by the neglect of those friends who could certainly have served him, had their intentions been as serious as their professions were fair. And if mere promises, whether fulfilled or neglected, bind to gratitude those in whose favour they are made, it is a better reason for their being liberally dispensed by courtiers and statesmen, than any which has been assigned for so general a practice. Upon the whole, we do no injustice to the relaters of this tale, in refusing credence to allegations unsupported by evidence,—brought forward so many years after Swift's death,—inconsistent with the whole tenor of his life and character,—and depending merely upon the report of a self-constituted and prejudiced reporter.

The dublications of Swift during this period, were not entirely confined to the feverish subject of politics. His "Project for the Advance-Rment of eligion," published in 1709, made a deep and powerful sensation on all who considered national prosperity as connected with national morals. It may in some respects be considered as a sequel of the humorous "Argument against abolishing Christianity." Several of Swift's biographers affect to discover a political tendency in the treatise; but excepting the complaint against the contempt of the clergy, which circumstances had then rendered more common, from their very generally entertaining Tory principles, it is difficult to trace any opinion which could give offence, even to the spleen of faction. The main argument, of taking away the wicked from before the throne, that it might be established in righteousness, is obviously more laudable than capable of application to practical use; and Swift's plan of censors or inspectors, who should annually make circuits of the kingdom, and report, upon oath, to the court or ministry, the state of public morals, would, from the natural frailty of human nature, be gradually converted into a most oppressive abuse. With better chance of practical and effectual reform, the author recommends to the court, to discourage characters of marked and notorious impiety; to revise, with more attention to moral and religious qualifications, the lists of justices of peace; to suppress the gross indecency and profaneness of the stage; and to increase the number of churches in the city of London. The last of these useful and practical hints alone was attended to; for, in the subsequent administration of Harley, fifty new churches were erected in the city of London, almost avowedly upon the suggestion of this pamphlet. The treatise was dedicated in an elegant, yet manly and independent style of eulogy, to Lady Berkeley, whose character, as we have already noticed, was justly venerated by the author. It was very favourably received by the public, and appears to have been laid before Queen Anne by the Archbishop of York, the very prelate who had denounced to her private ear the author of the "Tale of a Tub,"

as a divine unworthy of church-preferment. The work was also commended in the *Tatler*, as that of a man whose virtue sits easy about him, and to whom vice is thoroughly contemptible,—who writes very much like a gentleman, and goes to heaven with a very good mien.

A lighter species of literary amusement occasionally occupied Swift's time during this part of his life, and gave exercise to his peculiar talent of humour. Astrologers, though no longer consulted by princes and nobles, as was the case but a century before, retained still a sort of empire over the minds of the middling and lower classes, whom their almanacks instructed, not only in the stated revolutions of the planetary system, but in the fit times of physic and blood-letting,—the weather to be expected in particular months,—and, though expressed with due and prophetic ambiguity, in the public events which should occur in the course of the year. Among these empirics, one John Partridge, (if that was indeed his real name,*) had the fortune to procure a ludicrous immortality, by attracting the satire of Swift. This fellow, who was as ignorant and impudent as any of his canting fraternity, besides having published various astrological treatises, was the editor of an almanack, under the title of "Merlinus Liberatus." Swift, in ridicule of the whole class of impostors, and of this man in particular, published his celebrated "Predictions for the year 1708, by Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.," which, amongst other prognostications, announced, with the most happy assumption of the mixture of caution and precision affected by these annual soothsayers, an event of no less importance than the death of John Partridge himself, which he fixed to the 29th of March, about eleven at night. The wrath of the astrologer was, of course, extreme, and, in his almanack for 1709, he was at great pains to inform his loving countrymen, that Squire Bickerstaff was a sham name, assumed by a lying, impudent fellow, and that, "blessed be God, John Partridge was still living, and in health, and all were knaves who reported otherwise."† This round denial did not save him from further persecution. The "Vindication of Isaac Bicker-

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* Little is known of Partridge's private history, except from an altercation betwixt him and one Parker, which, of course, involved much personal abuse. According to his adversary, Partridge's real name was Hewson, a shoemaker by trade, (which particular at least is undoubted,) but by choice a confederate and dependent of old Gadbury, one of the greatest knaves who followed the knavish trade of astrology. In 1679, Partridge commenced business for himself, publishing two or three nonsensical works upon his imaginary science. He also practised physic, and styled himself Physician to his Majesty. But in King James's time, his almanacks grew so smart on Popery, that England became too hot for him; and, accordingly, John Dunton found him, with other refugees, in Holland. He returned at the Revolution, and married the widow of the Duke of Monmouth's tailor, who finally deposited him in the grave, which had so long gaped for him, in the year 1715.

† The secret of Bickerstaff's real name was probably for a time well kept, for poor Partridge, unwilling, as an astrologer, to appear ignorant of anything, thus opens manfully on a false scent, in a letter, dated London, 2nd April, 1708, addressed to Isaac Manley, post-master of Ireland, who, to add to the jest, was a particular friend of Swift, his real tormentor. The letter is preserved in the

staff" appeared, with several other treatises upon a subject which seems greatly to have amused the public. At length poor Partridge, despairing, by mere dint of his own assertions, to maintain the fact of his life and identity, had recourse, in an evil hour, to his neighbour, Dr. Yalden, who stated his grievances to the public in a pamphlet, called "Bickerstaff Detected, or the Astrological Impostor convicted," in which, under Partridge's name, he gave such a burlesque account of his sufferings, through the prediction of Bickerstaff, as makes one of the most humorous tracts in this memorable controversy. In 1710, Swift published a famous prediction of Merlin, the British wizard, giving, in a happy imitation of the style of Lily, a commentary on some black-letter-verses, most ingeniously composed in enigmatical reference to the occurrences of the time. There were two incidental circumstances worthy of notice in this ludicrous debate: 1st, The Inquisition of the kingdom of Portugal took the matter as seriously as John Partridge, and gravely condemned to the flames the predictions of the imaginary Isaac Bickerstaff. 2dly. By an odd coincidence, the company of stationers obtained, in 1709, an injunction against any almanack published under the name of John Partridge, as if the poor man had been dead in sad earnest. Swift appears to have been the inventor of the jest, and the soul of the confederacy under whose attacks Partridge suffered for about two years; but Prior, Rowe, Steele, Yalden, and other wits of the time, were concerned in the conspiracy, which might well have overwhelmed a brighter genius than the ill-fated Philo-math.

But the most memorable consequence of the predictions of Isaac Bickerstaff,* was the establishment of the *Tatler*, the first of that long series of periodical works, which, from the days of Addison to those of Mackenzie, have enriched our literature with so many effusions of genius, humour, wit, and learning. It appears that Swift

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valuable edition of the *Tatler*, 1786, vol. v., where the appendix contains a very full account of the unlucky astrologer.

"OLD FRIEND,

"I don't doubt but you are imposed upon in Ireland also, by a pack of rogues, about my being dead; the principal author of it is one in Newgate, lately in the pillory for a libel against the state. There is no such man as Bickerstaff; it is a sham name, but his true name is Pettie; he is always in a garret, a cellar, or a jail; and therefore you may by that judge what kind of reputation this fellow hath to be credited in the world. In a word, he is a poor, scandalous, necessitous creature, and would do as much by his own father, if living, to get a crown; but enough of such a rascal. I thank God I am very well in health; and at the time he had doomed me to death I was not in the least out of order. The truth is, it was a high flight at a venture, hit or miss. He knows nothing of astrology, but hath a good stock of impudence and lying. Pray, sir, excuse this trouble, for no man can better tell you I am well than myself; and this is to undeceive your credulous friends that may yet believe the death of your real humble servant,

"JOHN PARTRIDGE."

* Swift is said to have taken the name of Bickerstaff from a smith's sign, and added that of Isaac, as a Christian appellation of uncommon occurrence. Yet it was said a living person was actually found who owned both names.

was in the secret of Steele's undertaking from the beginning, though Addison only discovered it after the publication of the sixth number. By the assumption of the name of Isaac Bickerstaff, which an inimitable spirit of wit and humour had already made so famous, the new publication gained audience with the public, and obtained, under its authority, a sudden and general acceptance. Swift contributed several papers, and humorous hints to carrying on the undertaking, until the demon of politics disturbed his friendship with the editor.

These literary amusements, with the lines on Partridge's supposed death, the verses on Baucis and Philemon, those on Vanbrugh's house at Whitehall, with some other light pieces of occasional humour, seem chiefly to have occupied Swift's leisure about this period. Yet the controversy with Partridge, and these other levities, are better known to the general reader, than the laboured political treatises which we shall have occasion to mention in the next chapter.

To conclude the present chapter, it is only necessary to resume, that Dr. Swift, dissatisfied with the inefficient patronage of those ministerial friends from whom he had only received compliments, promises, and personal attentions, returned to Ireland early in the summer of 1709, and, estranging himself from the court of the lord-lieutenant, resumed his wonted mode of life at Laracor. The corrections and additions intended for his new edition of the "Tale of a Tub," probably occupied great part of his leisure, as we find him corresponding upon that subject with Tooke, the bookseller. He seems also to have meditated the publication of a volume of miscellanies. But his literary occupations were broken in upon by domestic affliction, for, in May, 1710, he received the news of his affectionate mother's death, after long illness. "I have now," he pathetically remarks, "lost my barrier between me and death. God grant I may live to be as well prepared for it as I confidently believe her to have been! If the way to heaven be through piety, truth, justice, and charity, she is there."

CHAPTER III.

Swift's journey to England, in 1710—*His quarrel with the Whigs, and union with Harley and the Administration—He writes the Examiner—The character of Lord Wharton—And other political tracts—Obtains the First-Fruits and Twentieth-Parts for the Irish Clergy—His correspondence with Archbishop King—His intimacy with the Ministers—The services which he renders to them—Project for improving the English Language—His protection of Literary Characters—Difficulties attending his church preferment—He is made Dean of St. Patrick's—And returns to Ireland.*

SWIFT had now become more than doubtful of those well-grounded views of preferment, which his interest with the Great Whig leaders naturally offered. He resided at Laracor during the greater

one friend left that had any credit; and his excellency was of my opinion.* I never once began your [*task*] since you [*left this,*] being perpetually prevented by all the company I kept, and especially Captain Pratt, to whom I am almost a domestic upon your account. I am convinced that, whatever Government come over, you will find all marks of kindness from any Parliament here, with respect to your employment;† the Tories contending with the Whigs which should speak best of you. Mr. Pratt says, he has received such marks of your sincerity and friendship, as he never can forget: and, in short, if you will come over again, when you are at leisure, we will raise an army, and make you King of Ireland.‡ Can you think so meanly of a kingdom, as not to be pleased that every creature in it, who hath one grain of worth, has a veneration for you? I know there is nothing in this to make you add any value to yourself; but it ought to put you on valuing them, and to convince you that they are not an undistinguishing people. On Thursday, the Bishop of Clogher, the two Pratts, and I, are to be as happy as Ireland will now give us leave; we are to dine with Mr. Paget at the Castle, and drink your health. The bishop showed me the first volume of the small edition of the *Tatler*, where there is a very handsome compliment to me; but I can never pardon the printing the news of every *Tatler*—I think he might as well have printed the advertisements. I knew it was a bookseller's piece of craft, to increase the bulk and price of what he was sure would sell; but I utterly disapprove it. I beg you would freely tell me whether it will be of any account for me to come to England. I would not trouble you for advice, if I knew where else to ask it. We expect every day to hear of my lord-president's§ removal; if he were to continue, I might, perhaps, hope for some of his good offices. You ordered me to give you a memorial of what I had in my thoughts. There were two things, Dr. So——th's prebend‖ and sinecure, or the place of historiographer. But if things go on in the train they are now, I shall only beg you, when there is an account to be depended on for a new government here, that you will give me early notice, to procure an addition to my fortunes. And, with saying so, I take my leave of troubling you with myself.

"I do not desire to hear from you till you are out of [*the*] hurry at Malmsbury.¶ I long till you have some good account of your Indian

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* Yet Swift must have then expected the commission from the bishops, which was granted a week afterwards. His answer to Lord Wharton must therefore be considered as evasive.

† Addison had been recently made keeper of the records in Ireland, with an augmented salary.

‡ This reminds us of an expression in the Journal to Stella. "Mr. Addison's election has past easy and undisputed; and I believe, if he had a mind to be chosen king, he would hardly be refused."

§ Somers.

‖ The celebrated Dr. South, Prebendary of Westminster, was then very infirm and far advanced in years. He survived, however, until 1716, and died aged 83.

¶ For which borough Addison was a candidate.

part of Lord Wharton's Administration; saw the lieutenant very seldom when he came to Dublin, and entered into no degree of intimacy with him or his friends, excepting only with Addison. Such is his own account of his conduct, which he prepared for publication at a time when hundreds were alive and upon the watch to confute any inaccuracy in his statement. He adds, that upon an approaching change in the political administration, Lord Wharton affected of a sudden greatly to caress him, which he imputes to a wish of rendering him odious to the church party.

The fall of that ministry, which had conducted with so much glory the war upon the Continent, was caused, or at least greatly accelerated, by one of those explosions of popular feeling peculiar to the English nation. Swift, with all his genius, had in vain taught the doctrine of moderation: but Sacheverell, with as little talent as principle, at once roused the whole nation, and became himself elevated into a saint and a martyr, by a single inflammatory sermon. He was carried in procession through the land,

> Per Graium populos, mediæque per Elidis urbem
> Ibat ovans——

and wherever the doctor appeared, arose a popular spirit of aversion to the Whig administration, and all who favoured the dissenters. Swift was probably no indifferent spectator, while the interests of the high-church party began to predominate over the power of those whose opinions in state policy had been avowedly his own. He did not, however, interfere in the controversy; and we learn from a passage in his Journal, that although he afterwards interceded for Sacheverell with Harley's administration, it was without esteem for the man, or favour to those principles of which the doctor was the champion. The following letter, which was written by Swift to Addison, upon the impending change of administration, seems to indicate that his slight expectations of promotion still rested upon the Whigs, and upon Lord Somers in particular. There is, however, to use a phrase of his own, some refinement in the epistle; for while Swift asks Addison's advice whether he should come to London, he had, in all probability, already determined on his journey, as he set out upon the first day of September following.

"Dublin, August 22, 1710.

"I looked long enough at the wind to set you safe at the other side, and then . . . . . our conduct, very unwilling for fear you [*about two lines are effaced*] up to a post-horse, and hazard your limbs to be made a member. I believe you had the displeasure of much ill news almost as soon as you landed. Even the moderate Tories here are in pain at these revolutions, being what will certainly affect the Duke of Marlborough, and consequently the success of the war. My lord-lieutenant asked me yesterday, when I intended for England? I said I had no business there now, since I suppose in a little time I should not have

affairs, so as to make public business depend upon you, and not you upon that. I read your character in Mrs. Manly's noble Memoirs of Europe.* It seems to me, as if she had about two thousand epithets and fine words packed up in a bag; and that she pulled them out by handfuls, and strewed them on her paper, where about once in five hundred times they happen to be right.

"My lord-lieutenant, I reckon, will leave us in a fortnight; I led him by a question, to tell me he did not expect to continue in the government, nor would, when all his friends were out. Pray take some occasion to let my [*Lord*] Halifax know the sense I have of the favour he intended me."

Swift's departure for England was, however, nearer than this letter announces. The hopes which were now entertained that Queen Anne would once more favour the High interest, had already extended themselves to Ireland, and it was thought by the clergy of that kingdom, a propitious season for renewing their suit for remission of the first-fruits and twentieth parts, in which they had formerly been unsuccessful. The Bishops of Ossory and Killaloe were employed to solicit a favourable answer to this supplication, and, by a letter from the prelates of Ireland, dated 31st August, 1710, Swift was united with them in commission, with a provision, that, in case the bishops should leave London before bringing the business to effect, the charge of further solicitation should entirely devolve upon him. On the 1st September, therefore, Swift left Ireland, and on the 9th of the same month reached London, where he was at once plunged into that tide of public business, of which his Journal to Stella affords such a singular record.

This extraordinary diary is addressed ostensibly to Mrs. Dingley, as well as Stella; but there is no doubt that all the unbounded confidence and tenderness which it exhibits, were addressed to the latter alone. It is a wonderful medley, in which grave reflections and important facts are at random intermingled with trivial occurrences and the puerile jargon of the most intimate tenderness. From Stella, nothing is to be either concealed or disguised; and as the journal is written during the hurry of every day's occurrences, it rather resembles the author's thoughts expressed aloud, as they passed through his mind, than a connected register of his opinions. What it wants, however, in system and gravity, it gains in authenticity and interest, for the readiness with which the author's pen expresses, in the "little language," every whim which crossed his brain, vouches for his ample and unreserved confidence:—a circumstance which ought to propitiate the offended gravity of those deep critics, who deem the publication of these frolicsome expansions of the heart and spirits derogatory to the character of a great and distinguished author. With gratitude,

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* "Memoirs of Europe towards the close of the eighth century, written by Eginardus, secretary and favourite of Charlemagne, and done into English by the translator of the 'New Atlantis.'" In this scandalous lampoon, Addison is introduced under the name of Maro.

therefore, for the light afforded upon our author's habits, opinions, and actions, by a record at once so minute and so authentic, we proceed to trace, by its assistance, the principal events of his life during this its most busy period.

Swift arrived in London, already prepossessed with a strong feeling of the neglect which he had experienced from the Whig administration. His old friends, however, appeared ravished to see him; offered apologies for the mode in which he had been treated, and caught at him as at a twig when they were drowning. The influence of Swift's talents upon the public opinion had already been manifested, and the Whigs were doubtless unwilling that their weight should be cast into the opposite scale. Godolphin alone despised to court in his fall the genius which he had neglected while possessed of power. His reception of Swift was short, dry, and morose; and he, who thought he deserved the contrary from a minister whose principles he had professed and supported, departed, almost vowing revenge. With Somers, also, he seems at this juncture to have quarrelled. He saw him on his arrival in London, but it was for the last time. This great statesman used some efforts to convince him, that he was serious in his recommending him to Lord Wharton's favour, and had written twice to that nobleman on the subject without receiving an answer. To this Swift answered, that he never expected anything from Lord Wharton, and that Wharton knew he understood it so. In short, he retained his opinion, that he had been treated with duplicity by Lord Somers, nor does he ever appear to have retracted it. To his literary friends, his arrival was as acceptable as ever. He resumed his intimacy with Addison and Steele, but refused to pledge Lord Halifax, when he proposed as a toast the Resurrection of the Whigs, unless he would add, "and their Reformation." Thus indifferent to the interests of the falling ministry, Swift was still astonished, and shocked at the bold steps taken by the court, in removing so many great statesmen from employment, and promised himself to be an unconcerned spectator of the struggles which such measures were likely to occasion. But let no man promise on his own neutrality. By 1st October, he had written a lampoon on Lord Godolphin,* and on the 4th, he was for the first time presented to Harley: and it is remarkable, that, on the very same day, he refused an invitation from Lord Halifax, thus making his option between those distinguished statesmen.

Harley had been prepared to meet Swift as one whose political tenets resembled his own, (for he also had been bred up in revolution principles,) but who was now a discontented person, ill-used, for not being "Whig enough," by the last administration. He was received accordingly, with all that kindness and respect which statesmen know so well how to show towards those whose attachment they deem worth securing. In the same paragraph which acquaints Stella with this

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* "Sid Hamet's Rod;" composed on occasion of Godolphin's breaking his treasurer's staff, in a manner not very respectful to the queen, his mistress.

first interview with the new prime minister, Swift announces, that he has given his lampoon against Godolphin to the press, and already threatens "to go round with them all." They met, therefore, with mutual views of union, Swift anxious to avenge the neglect with which he had been treated by the Whigs, and to advance the mission of which he was the solicitor, and Harley desirous of bringing to the support of the new administration, an author of talents so formidable and popular. By Harley Swift was introduced to St. John, (afterwards Lord Bolingbroke,) and the intercourse which he enjoyed with these ministers approached to intimacy with a progress more rapid than can well be conceived in such circumstances.*

But the assistance of Swift was essential to the existence of the ministry, and ample confidence was the only terms on which it could be procured. That which might be called properly the Tory party, by whose influence the new ministers had obtained and now held their station, differed in many essential points of doctrine, both from Harley and St. John, in so far, at least, as the principles of the latter were then understood. Both these statesmen had been members of Godolphin's administration, from which they had seceded in 1708, yet, having once belonged to it, they could not be supposed at once to rush to the opposite extremes of passive obedience and divine hereditary right. Still they were under the necessity of availing

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* The following passages in the Journal to Stella, with the dates, mark how rapidly Swift passed from acquaintance to intimate friendship, and a conformity of views and interests:—

"Oct. 4, 1710.—Mr. Harley received me with the greatest respect and kindness imaginable, and appointed me an hour, two or three days after, to open my business to him."

"Oct. 7.—I had no sooner told him my business, but he entered into it with all kindness; asked me for my powers, and read them; and read likewise a memorial I had drawn up, and put it into his pocket to show the queen: told me the measures he would take; and, in short, said everything I could wish. Told me he must bring Mr. St. John and me acquainted; and spoke so many things of personal kindness and esteem, that I am inclined to believe what some friends had told me, that he would do everything to bring me over. He desired me to dine with him on Tuesday; and, after four hours being with him, set me down at St. James's coffee-house in a hackney-coach.

"I must tell you a great piece of refinement in Harley. He charged me to come and see him often; I told him I was loth to trouble him, in so much business as he had, and desired I might have leave to come at his levee; which he immediately refused, and said, 'That was no place for friends.'"

"Oct. 10.—Harley tells me he has shown my memorial to the queen, and seconded it very heartily; because, said he, the queen designs to signify it to the bishops of Ireland in form, and take notice that it was done upon a memorial from you; which he said he did to make it look more respectful to me. I believe never was anything compassed so soon: and purely done by my personal credit with Mr. Harley; who is so excessively obliging, that I know not what to make of it, unless to show the rascals of the other party that they used a man unworthily who had deserved better. He speaks all the kind things to me in the world.—Oct. 14. I stand with the new people ten times better than ever I did with the old, and forty times more caressed."

themselves of the drift of popular opinion, as a boatman benefits by the current which bears him towards his haven, managing meanwhile by sail and oar, so to moderate and control its impulse, that it shall neither hurry him beyond the point proposed, nor dash him against the adjacent cliffs. Under such difficulties the talents of Swift, to mould and moderate the tone of public feeling, became of the last importance to the new rulers; and hence Harley laid aside his reserve, and St. John his levity, to vie in courtesy towards an author, whose principles in church and state had hitherto been those of moderation, and who combined the power of expressing and supporting his sentiments, in a manner at once forcible and adapted to the capacity of the public. Swift, on the other hand, beheld the triumph of the church establishment, and saw, with pleasure, that the affairs of state were to be conducted by men, whose tenets were ostensibly as favourable to liberty as his own. He saw, besides, an opportunity of wreaking his vengeance on those by whom he had been overlooked in the plenitude of their power; and, from the influence of those mixed motives, enlisted himself with heart and hand under the banners of the new ministers.

The first and most urgent point in which they required his assistance, was the conduct of the *Examiner*, a periodical paper, which St. John himself, Prior, Dr. Freind, King, and other Tory writers, had already commenced as the organ of the new rulers. Thirteen numbers had been published, and the want of a regular and responsible editor was already visible. The thirteenth number was an avowed and violent defence of the doctrine of hereditary right, in its most absurd extent.* This was a subject on which they were willing to avoid committing themselves, and caution was the more necessary, as Addison had already, in a paper called the *Whig Examiner*, assumed the task of replying to and exposing the arguments of their Coryphæus. But three weeks ere Swift entered the field of controversy, it was relinquished by his illustrious contemporary.† The moderate and gentle disposition of Addison was ill suited for the virulence of personal debate; and if he withdrew from it when he learned that Swift was about to take the field, it is neither an imputation on his talents nor his courage, that he should have avoided a contest at once doubtful, harassing, and invidious. It was the avowed purpose of this publication, "to censure the writings of others, and to give all persons a re-hearing, who had suffered under any unjust sentence of the *Examiner*," and during the existence of the work, the task was accom-

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* This was No. XIII. of the original edition of the *Examiners*. But being omitted in the republication of that paper, the first number composed by Swift came to rank as No. XIII., which had originally been No. XIV.

† Dr. Johnson overlooked this circumstance when he represented the controversy as conducted between Swift and Addison personally. The last *Whig Examiner* is dated 12th October, 1710, and No. XIII. of the *Examiner*, the first written by Swift, is dated 2nd November, at the distance of about three weeks.

plished with great energy and little mercy. Not only Sacheverell, but Prior, and St. John himself, were attacked and severely satirized. The *Whig Examiner* was succeeded by the *Medley*, on the same side of the question, a periodical paper composed by Oldmixon, and revised by Mainwaring. The first number appeared 5th October, 1710, and the last, being Number XLV., is dated 6th August, 1711, during which period the authors maintained a constant warfare with the *Examiners*. This last publication was conducted by Swift, from the 13th to the 45th and 46th Numbers, or from 10th November, 1710, to 14th June, 1711, a space of seven months, during which time, in the language of Homer, he bore the battle upon his single shield, and by the vigour of his attack, and dexterity of his defence, inspired his own party with courage, and terrified or discomfited those champions who stepped from the enemy's ranks for the purpose of assailing him. Unrestrained by those considerations which probably influenced the gentler mind of Addison, he engaged in direct personal controversy, and, not satisfied with directing his artillery on the main body of the enemy, he singled out for his aim, particular and well-known individuals. Wharton, whose character laid him too open to such an attack, was the first of those victims; Sunderland, Godolphin, Cowper, Walpole, and Marlborough himself, became the butts of his satire; but he is least justifiable where it is exerted against Lord Somers, whose services to his country, independent of ancient friendship and undeniable virtues, ought to have silenced such reproaches as had no better foundation than a private scandal.

It was not, however, in the *Examiner* alone, that Swift manifested his zeal for Harley's administration: with a readiness and versatility almost inconceivable, he assumed every shape which could give courage to his friends, and perplex or annoy their opponents. His ready talent for popular poetry was laid under liberal contribution; and "Sid Hamet's Rod" was succeeded by a variety of pamphlets and lampoons, composed or corrected by Swift, whose effect upon the public mind, while they had all the raciness of fresh and current personal satire, may be guessed by the amusement which they continue to afford the reader, when many innuendos are lost, and others can only be understood through the labour of the commentator. His resentment against Lord Wharton he again indulged, in the "Short Character" of that nobleman, with some account of his government. The character was drawn in the keenest strokes of satire; and it seems only to have grieved the writer, that the facts imputed to the lord-lieutenant, being rather morally flagitious than legally criminal, afforded no grounds for the impeachment with which Wharton had been threatened by the predominant Tories. He also published "Remarks upon a Letter to the seven Lords who examined Greg," a tract designed to vindicate Harley's character, whom the spirit of party endeavoured to implicate in a treasonable correspondence, which that person, a clerk in his office, had maintained with the public enemy.

While thus actively engaged in political controversy, Swift did not omit to solicit the cause for which he had been deputed from Ireland.

The interest which he enjoyed with the new ministers, together with their wish to be considered as benefactors to the church, soon obtained for the Irish clergy the long-solicited grant of the first-fruits. But before this satisfactory result of Swift's mission was known in Ireland, the Bishops (slow, it would seem, in political intelligence) had adopted an idea, that, from his former intimacy with the Whig party, he would be no agreeable intercessor with those now in power, and therefore recalled his commission, under the pretext of putting the whole affair into the hands of the Duke of Ormond. Swift was naturally offended and disgusted at being encountered with such a requital, at the very moment when he had achieved the object of his mission, and had a right to expect the thanks of the convocation. It is the subject of a correspondence with Archbishop King, in which that prelate makes some reluctant and awkward excuses for the treatment which Swift had received from his brethren. Indeed, all the letters which pass between these distinguished men, exhibit much more formality and respect, than real friendship and kindness. And, finally, when Swift expected that the archbishop would propose some mode of requiting the services which the church owed him upon this occasion, he received a curious letter of advice, in which King recommends to him, (needlessly, surely,) first, to push his present interest with government into obtaining some preferment that might make him easy; and, secondly, after an oblique hint that his literary hours had been hitherto but idly employed, he advises his correspondent to look into Dr. Wilkin's "Heads of Matters," contained in his "Gift of Preaching," and thence select some serious and useful theological subject, and so to manage it as to be of use to the world. Swift considered this letter as a sort of covered insult; and replied to the first part, that though his interest was as great at court as ever belonged to one of his level, he would never solicit for himself, whatever he had done for others; to the second, that to advise him to become useful to the church, by his writings, while his own fate was totally uncertain, was to ask a man floating at sea, what he meant to do when he came ashore. But, notwithstanding these petty feuds, the archbishop and Swift continued on terms of civility, and occasional correspondence, until the death of the prelate; and King is mentioned with high commendation in an "Essay on the use of Irish manufactures," and other treatises of the author.

Swift was now the constant friend and associate of Harley and St. John; the moderator in their disputes: the assistant of their counsels; the sharer and enlivener of their social moments,—and that upon a footing of freedom and independence usually unknown in such relations. He not only spurned at the proposal of pecuniary remuneration for his literary labours, but made the offer itself a cause of quarrel with Mr. Harley.* He even rejected the situation of chaplain,

* Feb. 6, 1710. "Mr. Harley desired me to dine with him again to-day, but I refused him; for I fell out with him yesterday, and will not see him again till he makes me amends."

Feb. 7. "I was this morning early with Mr. Lewis of the secretary's office, and

when offered to him by the same statesman.* And he assumed and maintained the right of an independent friend, to take umbrage at the slightest shadow of caprice in those to whom he was so ardently attached. Indeed, it was probably the exercise of this intimacy, and the display of power which it implied, which were the chief gratifications received by Swift, from the high situation which he occupied during this administration; for a contempt of rank, and a marked neglect of the ceremonials it requires, were carried by him to the verge of affectation. This was doubtless an error, and one which leaves room to suspect, that the advantages which he studiously undervalued, held, in truth, more than their just proportion in his estimate. The whim of publicly sending the prime-minister into the House of Commons to call out the first secretary of state, only to let him know that he would not dine with him if he dined late; the insisting that a duke should make him the first visit, merely because he was a duke; —these, and other capricious exertions of despotic authority over the usual customs of society, are unworthy of Swift's good sense and penetration. In a free country, the barriers of etiquette between the ranks of society are but frail and low, the regular gate is open, and the tax of admittance a trifle; and he who, out of mere wantonness, overleaps the fence, may be justly supposed not to have attained a philosophical indifference to the circumstance of being born in the excluded district. The conduct of Swift, in this particular, did not escape the satirists of the opposite party, who scrutinized, with a jealous and unfriendly eye, both his life, habits, and manners. The most curious of these specimens of dislike and apprehension, occurs in the diary of Bishop Kennet, a zealous Whig, who, in the state and patronage assumed by Swift, as well as in his favour for the poetry of *one Mr. Pope, a Papist*, saw little else than the speedy introduction of Popery and the Pretender. The picture is powerfully drawn, though with a coarse and invidious pencil:—"1713. Dr. Swift came into the coffeehouse, and had a bow from everybody but me. When I came to the antechamber to wait before prayers, Dr. Swift was the principal

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saw a letter Mr. Harley had sent him, desiring to be reconciled; but I was deaf to all entreaties, and have desired Lewis to go to him, and let him know that I expected farther satisfaction. If we let these great ministers pretend too much, there will be no governing them. He promises to make me easy, if I would but come and see him; but I won't, and he shall do it by message, or I will cast him off. I will tell you the cause of our quarrel when I see you, and refer it to yourselves. In that he did something, which he intended for a favour, and I have taken it quite otherwise, disliking both the thing and the manner, and it has heartily vexed me; and all I have said is truth, though it looks like jest: and I absolutely refused to submit to his intended favour, and expect farther satisfaction."

In a subsequent part of the Journal he acquaints Stella with the cause of quarrel, which was the offer of a bank note of fifty pounds.

* "My Lord Oxford, —— by a second hand, proposed my being his chaplain, which I, by a second hand, excused. I will be no man's chaplain alive." And he elsewhere declares his reason for refusing was, that it did not become him to engage in a state of dependence.

JOURNAL TO STELLA, April 1, 1711. "I dined with the secretary, who seemed

man of talk and business, and acted as a master of requests. He was soliciting the Earl of Arran to speak to his brother the Duke of Ormond, to get a chaplain's place established in the garrison of Hull for Mr. Fiddes, a clergyman in that neighbourhood, who had lately been in jail, and published sermons to pay fees. He was promising Mr. Thorold to undertake with my lord-treasurer, that according to his petition, he should obtain a salary of 200*l.* per annum, as minister of the English church at Rotterdam. He stopped F. Gwynne, Esq., going in with the red bag to the Queen, and told him aloud he had something to say to him from my lord-treasurer. He talked with the son of Dr. Davenant to be sent abroad, and took out his pocket-book and wrote down several things, as memoranda, to do for him. He turned to the fire, and took out his gold watch, and telling him the time of the day, complained it was very late. A gentleman said, 'he was too fast.'—'How can I help it,' says the doctor, 'if the courtiers give me a watch that won't go right?' Then he instructed a young nobleman, that the best poet in England was Mr. Pope, (a Papist,) who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse, for which 'he must have them all subscribe; for,' says he, 'the author *shall not* begin to print till *I have* a thousand guineas for him.' Lord-treasurer, after leaving the queen, came through the room, beckoning Dr. Swift to follow him: both went off just before prayers."

"Nov. 3.—I see and hear a great deal to confirm a doubt, that the Pretender's interest is much at the bottom of some hearts: a whisper that Mr. Nelson had a prime hand in the late book for hereditary right: and that one of them was presented to majesty itself, whom God preserve from the effect of such principles and such intrigues!"

It has been suggested by Swift's noble biographer, that this humour of predominating over those whose rank was superior to his own, impeded his rise in the church, and even limited his intercourse with the administration of 1710, to a seeming rather than a real confidence. "His spirit," says Lord Orrery, "for I would give it the softest name,

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terribly down and melancholy; which Mr. Prior and Lewis observed as well as I: perhaps something is gone wrong; perhaps there is nothing in it."

April 3. "I called at Mr. Secretary's to see what the d—— ailed him on Sunday; I made him a very proper speech, told him I observed he was much out of temper; that I did not expect he would tell me the cause, but would be glad to see he was in better; and one thing I warned him of, never to appear cold to me for I would not be treated like a schoolboy; that I had felt too much of that in my life already, (meaning from Sir William Temple;) that I expected every great minister who honoured me with his acquaintance, if he heard or saw anything to my disadvantage, would let me know in plain words, and not put me in pain to guess by the change or coldness of his countenance or behaviour; for it was what I would hardly bear from a crowned head; and I thought no subject's favour was worth it; and that I designed to let my lord keeper and Mr. Harley know the same thing, that they might use me accordingly. He took all right; said I had reason; vowed nothing ailed him, but sitting up all nights at business, and one night at drinking; would have had me dine with him and Mrs. Masham's brother, to make up matters; but I would not: I don't know, but I would not. But indeed I was engaged with my old friend Rollinson; you never heard of him before."

was ever untractable. The motions of his genius were often irregular. He assumed more the air of a patron than of a friend. He affected rather to dictate than advise." This is the language of one who felt that the adventitious distinctions of rank sunk before the genius of Swift; and who, though submitting to the degradation during the Dean's life, in order to enjoy the honour of calling himself his friend, was not unwilling, after the death of that friend, to indemnify himself for the humiliation which he had sustained in the course of their intercourse. The following passage, when it is considered, that Swift, of whom it treats, was one of the most keen and penetrating of mankind, jealous even to punctilio of frank and cordial reciprocity of confidence in the friendships which he formed with the great, appears yet more fantastical and groundless. "He was elated with the appearance of enjoying ministerial confidence. He enjoyed the shadow, the substance was detained from him. He was employed, not trusted; and at the same time he imagined himself a subtile diver, who dexterously shot down into the profoundest regions of politics; he was suffered only to sound the shallows nearest the shore, and was scarce admitted to descend below the froth at the top. Perhaps the deeper bottoms were too muddy for his inspection." It had been kind of his lordship, in elucidation of this metaphorical tirade, to have given us some glimpse into those profound regions of state policy, which the sagacity of Swift did not enable him to fathom. Without such light, we can only attach one interpretation to these expressions, namely, that the ministry of Queen Anne had determined upon the restoration of the line of Stuart, as the ultimate purpose of their government. In this supposed case, certainly Swift was not of their counsel. But if a scheme so desperate was ever meditated, it could be by St. John alone, when, placing himself at the head of the violent Tory and Jacobite party, he broke off all friendship with Harley; and such a plan could only have been formed after Swift had retired to Letcombe, where there was no opportunity of intrusting it to him, if, indeed, his acquiescence could have been expected, in a project so contrary to his well-known principles. As for the other depths of state policy, pure or muddy, deep or shallow, which were sounded by Queen Anne's last ministry, they are now well known to history; and a short deduction of Swift's labours in the cause of that government, will plainly show how intimately they were then known to him.

The first and most pressing danger of the new ministers, arose from the difficulty they experienced in restraining the impetuosity of the Tory party, who had, indeed, borne them into power, but who watched, with an eye of doubt and jealousy, ministers whom their superior talents for public business, rather than ardent party zeal, had recommended to the situations they held. Hence a schism arose among the majority of the House of Commons, and a numerous body of country members, under the title of the October Club, formed themselves into an association for controlling the government and hurrying matters to extremity against the obnoxious members of the opposite party. The

talents of Swift were employed to appease a discontent which was hastily ripening into mutiny, and his "Advice humbly offered to the members of the October Club," had the desired effect of softening some, and convincing others, until the whole body of malcontents was first divided and finally dissolved. The treatise is a masterpiece of Swift's political skill, judiciously palliating those ministerial errors which could not be denied, and artfully intimating those excuses, which, resting upon the disposition of Queen Anne herself, could not, in policy or decency, be openly pleaded. Such were his services during this first crisis in the new administration. But another still more perilous was rapidly approaching.

The very existence of Harley's administration rested upon the possibility of making a peace with France; and as such necessity was but too obvious to that wily nation, she seized the opportunity of endeavouring to regain by negotiation, what she had lost by the victorious arms of Marlborough. The mind of the public, therefore, was to be prepared, not for such a peace as might have justly been expected to conclude a war of distinguished success; but for such terms as France might be induced to grant from the dread of over-playing her own game, and so becoming the means of destroying the very administration on whose continuance the prospect of peace depended. For this purpose, Prior was despatched to Paris, and Swift undertook to pave the way for peace, by representing that England was the dupe of her allies, and bore almost the whole burden of the war, of which they reaped the exclusive advantage. A light and humorous pamphlet, professing to give an account of Prior's journey, but in truth a mere fiction from beginning to end, was first published to amuse the credulous, and perhaps gradually to reconcile the public mind to the possibility of a peace with France. But the design was more gravely prosecuted in the celebrated treatise upon the "Conduct of the Allies," and in the "Remarks upon the Barrier Treaty." The reasoning in these pieces was most judiciously adapted to the prejudices of the English people. Neither the pride nor the good sense of the nation would have endured any arguments drawn from the uncertain fortunes of war, or from the state of the present campaign. But they listened with greedy ear to reasoning which assured them that the triumphs of English valour brought only honour to the country, while the Whig ministry at home exhausted the finances of Britain, and the Dutch and Germans abroad, by a train of gross encroachment and imposition, broke every article of the treaty, and treated England with insolence and contempt, at the very time she was gaining towns, provinces, and kingdoms for them, at the price of her own ruin, and without the slightest prospect of national interest. The treatise on the "Conduct of the Allies," appeared on the 27th November, 1711, while the question of peace and war was depending before Parliament. Four editions were devoured by the public in the space of a week, and perhaps no production of the kind ever produced so strong an effect upon general opinion. It was the text-book from which the ministerial

members in the House of Commons quoted their facts, and drew their arguments; while the Whigs, on the contrary, threatened to bring the author to the bar of the House of Lords, where by the junction of Lord Nottingham, that party had acquired a temporary superiority. But Swift did not upon this occasion gain the painful distinction of proscription, to which he was afterwards repeatedly subjected. While Walpole and Aislabie harangued against him, the ministers employed the pen which they had found so forcible, in drawing up the celebrated "Representation of the House of Commons on the State of the Nation," and the subsequent "Address of Thanks to the Queen," two state-papers of the utmost importance.

While thus extending and confirming his interest with the party which was in power, it followed, almost necessarily, that Swift became gradually estranged from those friends with whom he had formerly been familiar. The coldness which arose between him and Addison, may be traced from passages in the Journal, and seems to have commenced on the part of the latter. Indeed, when politics occasion dissension between two men of generous spirit, he who is opposed to the party in power is for that single reason the most ready to take offence. Swift had used every effort consistent with the line of political conduct which he had adopted, to propitiate his friends of the Whig party. Congreve, Rowe, and Philips, experienced in their turn the benefits of his intercession, and it appears that he was really anxious to have been of service to Steele. Against this ardent and ready writer the ministers entertained a deep antipathy. He had published in his *Tatler* a very poignant satire against the new administration, [written by Henley], in which, under the allegory of a change of management at a theatre, Harley is represented as a deep intriguer, who had worked himself into the direction of the stage, to the extirpation of the good old British actors, and the introduction of foreign pretenders. This and similar attacks upon government, occasioned Steele being deprived of his office of Gazetteer. It is stated by Swift, and I have found it nowhere contradicted, that he interceded with ministers at this crisis in behalf of Steele, who, through his intercession, was permitted to retain his other post of commissioner of stamp duties. So far, therefore, the balance of obligation was against Steele. But, as usually happens in such cases, that author's warm interference in politics drew upon him personal abuse in several papers of the *Examiner*, which was then the official organ of the ministerial party. These Steele seems to have imputed, in part at least, to the influence of his alienated friend; and in the *Guardian*, No. 53, he alludes to Swift with assumed contempt, and classes him as a reputed author of the *Examiner* along with Mrs. Manley, of whose character, in the same sentence, he pronounces the infamy: Swift adds that he charged him with infidelity, but the passage was afterwards softened or omitted. This was the first open blow,—a blow for which no occasion was given, unless we suppose, with the annotator on the *Tatler*, that Swift, although not at that time the editor of the *Examiners*,

either countenanced or failed to expunge those personal reflections of which Steele complained. Swift, who appears keenly to have felt the insult, wrote a letter of exculpation to Addison, in which he disclaimed all concern with the *Examiner;* declared himself a stranger to the author, and charged Steele with injustice and ingratitude in attacking, without any previous request of explanation, a friend, at whose entreaty and intercession he had been suffered to retain his office. This produced a petulant reply from Steele, in which he told Swift that the ministers "laughed at him," if they made him believe they had kept Steele in his office at his intercession; that if Swift had ever spoken in his favour, he was glad he had treated him with respect, although he still believed he was an accomplice of the *Examiner;* and he accuses Swift of duplicity and evasion, in his mode of denying that connexion. To this Swift returned a very angry vindication, in which he alleged, that, through his interest, the lord-treasurer had appointed a meeting with Steele, without requiring him to sacrifice any friend or principle, but that Steele had broken his appointment; and he adds, that he himself had not the least *hand* in writing any of the *Examiners;* had never exchanged a syllable with the supposed author (Oldisworth) in his life, nor ever seen him above twice, and that in mixed company.* Under this explanation, the blame of the open breach must remain with Steele, who, excited by a groundless suspicion, attacked in public the friend who had struggled in private to protect his interests, and that without soliciting either amicable explanation or apology. Modern editors have indeed doubted, with Steele, the truth of Swift's assertions, of his being totally unconnected with the *Examiner;* and an attempt has been made to glean evidence to the contrary, from his Journal to Stella, in which he mentions, upon different occasions, correcting the pieces of inferior agents, and conducting in secret the subordinate paper warfare which was maintained between the parties. But the admittance of such reasoning would make Swift as justly liable for the whole scurrility, without exception, (and it was no small quantity), with which the Tory pamphleteers of the time bespattered the opposite party. Besides, if the Journal be taken for evidence, it will appear from that authority, that the *Examiners* were not under Swift's control, for he regrets not being able to soften the reflections which they cast upon Marlborough. A suspicion, therefore, of so vague a nature, furnishes no ground for disputing the solemn averment of Swift himself, who, as he lay under no obligation to Steele, was not surely under temptation to pledge himself unnecessarily to a direct and positive falsehood. That he interceded for Steele is certain; and why he should be suspected of privately injuring by libels the man whom he had endeavoured to

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* This is confirmed by what he tells Stella, whom he was under no temptation to deceive:—"He (Oldisworth) is an ingenious fellow, but the most confounded vain coxcomb in the world, so that I dare not let him see me, nor am acquainted with him."—This was on the 12th March, 1712-13, just before his breach with Steele.

serve, will require both proof and explanation, ere it can be recorded to the prejudice of Swift's character. It is, however, deeply to be regretted, that, in their subsequent controversy, Swift should have so totally forgotten their former friendship in their present animosity.

Meantime, if, in one instance, a friend had misconstrued his attempts to serve him, he was successful in the acquisition of others, who united with him in their sentiments on public affairs. The formation of the Society of Brothers, consisting of men of the first rank and most eminent talents among the Tories, who agreed to call themselves by the fraternal title, was accomplished under his auspices. It was by their assistance, that, in the midst of political faction, and during much business, more or less dependent upon his personal labour, Swift meditated a task so gigantic as to limit and fix the English tongue by a general standard, to be ascertained by a society resembling the French Academy. The antiquities of our language had been no part of Swift's study; and he obviously shows an ignorance of the leading fact, that the present speech of England did not, properly speaking, exist as a language until about the time of Edward III., when mutual convenience had accomplished a compound betwixt the French, which was the exclusive dialect of the nobles, and the Saxon, which was spoken by the inferior orders. The golden period of our language he conceives to have been from the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth, until the breaking out of the civil war in 1642. Yet those who consider, on the one hand, the comparative poverty of the English of that period, and on the other the quaint affectations which have since become obsolete, will see no better reason for fixing upon the age of Elizabeth, than on any which has succeeded it, as the most improved period of the English tongue. The subsequent enlargement of science has rendered a proportional addition to our vocabulary altogether indispensable; and phrases at first introduced as the language of philosophy, are aptly and properly employed in oblique and metaphorical senses, until they become a part of our ordinary speech. And this gradual progress of improvement, of enlargement at least, must continue to influence our language, until the pitch of national improvement shall be attained and passed, and until authors, as well as the public, to whom they address themselves, shall look back unanimously toward the compositions of some particular period, as what must ever be the objects of their imitation, but never of their successful rivalry. An era like this seems to have taken place, both in Spain and Italy, where the necessity of composing in the same language, and upon the same plan which was used by their ancestors, has indeed fixed the dialect, but has, at the same time, neutralized the genius of those writers by whom it is to be employed. The utility, therefore, of a society whose statutes should fix down the present generation to use the very language, which, under different circumstances, and when knowledge was less generally diffused, was used by their forefathers, may be greatly questioned. Of the practicability of the scheme, Dr. John-

son has justly observed, that every man would have been willing, and many would have been proud, to disobey the decrees of the proposed academy, and that the institution being renewed by successive elections, would, in a short time, have differed from itself. There is but one mode in which the man of literature can contribute to the purity and stability of language, and in this the success of Swift himself has been at least equal to all that might have been expected from his projected institution. This can only be by such careful selection of words, and sedulous attention to style, as may attract at once the approbation of his contemporaries, and become the object of imitation to his successors. It is upon the permanent popularity of an author alone, that his influence upon the speech of succeeding ages can be founded; and when that popularity rests upon the sure basis of literary merit, his language will remain current and intelligible, not only from its own purity, but because it is used in writings, with which it would be a disgrace not to be intimately acquainted.

Swift's letter to the lord-treasurer upon this subject was published in May, 1712, and the reception it met with might have convinced the author for what a refractory class of subjects he was proposing a legislation and constitution. Various answers were published to his proposal, all tending to impugn the authority of the institution, ere it was yet embodied, and several intimating, with the usual candour of disputants, that the chief purpose of the author was to create for himself an office of power and of profit; for such is the alchemy of faction, whether literary or political, that it can extract scandal out of circumstances the most innocent or laudable. Meanwhile the lord-treasurer, according to his wonted custom, gave fair promises, and nothing more: and thus fell to the ground a proposal in which, as in many other cases, an inadequate remedy is proposed for an evil, which, if indeed it be a real one, is inherent in the progressive state of society. There is every reason to think, that Swift was deeply interested in the success of his scheme; and it is probable that a small vocabulary, entitled "An Explanation of difficult English words," may have been compiled by him on this occasion. The manuscript is imperfect, and of little value, unless in point of curiosity.

The "Letter on the English Language" is the only purely literary publication which Swift had leisure to produce during this bustling period; for the publication of the "Miscellanies," which took place in 1711, contains nothing new. They were published for John Morphew, without Swift's name, and apparently without his knowledge, but in a respectable form, and with a preface, indicating the author, and apologizing for the liberty of giving these pieces to the world without his consent. We have seen that Swift himself designed such a publication, but he had probably given up his purpose when he found himself engaged in writing political tracts, which would arrange but indifferently with "The Contests in Athens and Rome." He disowns Morphew's "Miscellanies" in his journal, yet expresses his doubts that Tooke, with whom he had corresponded on the subject of

such a publication, was at the bottom of the undertaking. There may still be some room to believe, considering his habitual and mysterious circumspection on these occasions, that the book was not absolutely a piracy.

We cannot account the history of the peace of Utrecht, which was undertaken by Swift about this time, a purely literary composition. The ministers, who had designed to lay the foundation of their power in that treaty, soon saw themselves assailed from the vantage-ground which it afforded to the opposition. Swift, whose popular arguments had reconciled the people to the prospect of a peace, was now required to conciliate their good opinion of its conditions. His work, afterwards enlarged into a history of the four last years of Queen Anne's reign, was accordingly commenced, and, from various passages in his journal, appears to have occupied much of his time about this period. But Oxford and Bolingbroke, who now quarrelled upon every occasion, could not agree upon the light in which particular incidents were to be represented, and the publication was postponed against the opinion of the author, who conceived it might have been of considerable service to the ministerial cause.

If Swift was himself interrupted in the career of general literature, no part of his character is more admirable than his zeal in assisting and bringing forward all who seemed to cultivate its art with success. He relieved the necessitous, he supported the dependent, and insisted that more distinguished genius should receive from his powerful friends, that kindness and distinction to which it is so well entitled. Congreve, a Whig in politics, and who apprehended being deprived of his office under government, was treated by Harley, at Swift's request, with such marked regard and assurance of protection, as excited his astonishment, while it allayed his apprehensions. "And thus," says Swift, with the complacence of conscious virtue, "I have made a worthy man easy, and that's a good day's work."* He obtained also for the amiable Parnell, that prompt attention which is most flattering to the modesty of merit. At court, he contrived that the lord-treasurer should make the first advances to the man of letters, and thus as he boasts to Stella, made the minister desire to be acquainted with

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* Of this, among many others, take the following instances: Journal, Feb. 12, 1712. "I dined to-day with our society, the greatest dinner I have ever seen. It was at Jack Hill's, the Governor of Dunkirk. I gave an account of sixty guineas I had collected, and am to give them away to two authors to-morrow. And lord-treasurer has promised me one hundred pounds to reward some others."—13th. "I was to see a poor poet, one Mr. Diaper, in a nasty garret, very sick. I gave him twenty guineas from Lord Bolingbroke, and disposed the other sixty to two other authors."—In that of March 30th, "I was naming some time ago, to a certain person, another certain person, that was very deserving, and poor, and sickly; and the other, that first certain person, gave me one hundred pounds to give the other. The person who is to have it never saw the giver, nor expects one farthing, nor has the least knowledge or imagination of it; so I believe it will be a very agreeable surprise; for I think it a handsome present enough. I paid the 100*l.* this evening, and it was a great surprise to the receiver."

Parnell, not Parnell with the minister.* Pope, who was now labouring on his Homer, experienced that warm and effectual support which is acknowledged in the preface to the Iliad; and the foundation was laid of the memorable friendship, which lasted until the conclusion of their lives. It was by Swift's interest that Gay was made known to Lord Bolingbroke, and obtained his patronage. Arbuthnot, although he needed not our author's recommendation, having established himself by his professional merit, enjoyed in the most intimate degree the pleasure and advantage which were afforded by his society. Berkeley, afterwards the celebrated Bishop of Cloyne, owed to Swift those introductions which placed him in the way of promotion. "This, I think," said Swift upon that occasion, "I am bound to, in honour and conscience, to use all my little credit towards helping forward men of worth in the world." In like manner, he recommended Rowe to a post under government; and although Prior, with whom he lived in strict intimacy, had no occasion for his services during the reign in which he flourished as a political character of eminence, yet, in that which followed, he received, during his distresses, the most effectual support from Swift's experienced friendship. With such literary friends and associates, Swift might well despise the abuse of Dennis, Oldmixon, and Smedley, endure the enmity of Steele, and even the estrangement of Addison.† His attention was kindly and willingly extended, even where literary merit was less remarkable. Dr. King, notwithstanding his having been Swift's personal antagonist, was made Gazetteer through his influence. Diaper and others were relieved under the pressure of poverty; and Harrison was placed in a situation to have advanced his fortune, had life been spared to him. The early death

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* Journal to Stella, 31st January, 1712-13. "I contrived it so that lord-treasurer came to me, and asked, (I had Parnell by me,) whether that was Dr. Parnell, and spoke to him with great kindness." Dr. Delany has given the anecdote too high a colouring, and certainly injured the grace of the compliment, by supposing that Swift made Lord Oxford, "in the height of his glory, walk with his treasurer's staff from room to room, through his own levee, inquiring which was Dr. Parnell." The attention in the real case was simple and delicate; in the other it would have been affected and ostentatious.

† The coldness between those great characters, seems to have commenced on Steele's account. 22nd October, 1710, Swift expressed his wishes to Addison to mediate with the minister in Steele's favour, but his offer was drily received. On the 14th December, the breach seems to have grown wider, for Swift observes, "Mr. Addison and I are different as black and white, and I believe our friendship will go off by this damned business of party. He cannot bear seeing me fall in so with the ministry; but I love him still as much as ever, though we seldom meet." And again on the following day, he blames Addison as having been the means of preventing Steele's accommodation with the ministry. And shortly after the estrangement, for it cannot be termed a quarrel, reached its highest point, "I called at the coffee-house, where I had not been in a week, and talked coldly awhile with Mr. Addison; all our friendship and dearness are off; we are civil acquaintance, talk words of course, of when we shall meet, and that's all. Is it not odd? But I think he has used me ill, and I have used him too well, at least his friend Steele." Addison and Swift, however, continued to meet occasionally, notwithstanding their difference, and a foundation was luckily left for the reconciliation which afterwards took place between them.

of this young man, who had been recommended to Swift by Addison, was bewailed by his patron in terms which, from their plain and affecting simplicity, show how deeply he was interested in those whom he honoured by his protection.*

The benefit of Swift's protection was not limited to literary characters. All his friends, and even the friends of those friends, who had occasion for his good offices, Bernage, Beaumont, and many others, had the benefit of his intercession. He made the fortune of Barber the printer, who became afterwards lord mayor of London, and a man of great wealth. He recommended Dr. Freind to be physician-general in the army in Spain. In short, he laid the basis of that list of upwards of forty persons, including many of the highest respectability, both in point of fortune and talents, whom he had a right afterwards to consider as his debtors, and, according to their conduct towards him, to distinguish into the classes of grateful, ungrateful, and dubious. In short, as he expresses it in his Journal to Stella, he found himself able to forward the interest of every one, excepting only his own.

While, indeed, Swift enjoyed so ample a power over the fortune of others, his own, to the surprise of the public, and no doubt to his internal disappointment, remained entirely stationary. The ministers, who admitted him to their utmost confidence, and shared with him at once their hours of business and of relaxation, appeared to have forgotten, while disposing of numerous church preferments, that the chief pillar of their cause, so far as it depended upon influence over the public mind, was only an Irish vicar, with the aid of a very poor prebendary. Swift, who disdained to solicit the advancement which he considered as his due, seems to have imputed for a time the delay of its arrival to the habits of procrastination peculiar to Harley, and to the unwillingness of the ministry to raise him to such a dignified situation in the church, as might limit in its consequence his opportunities of affording them assistance in their politics. But when in their intimacy they called him Jonathan, and he retorted that he supposed they would leave him Jonathan as they found him, the expression indirectly implied expectation as well as reproach; nor did all the kindness and complacence of the lord-treasurer prevent Swift from expressing peevishness on the delay which occurred in making some honourable provision for his future life.† But there was a lion in the

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* "14th. I took Parnell this morning, and we walked to see poor Harrison. I had the hundred pounds in my pocket. *I told Parnell I was afraid to knock at the door; my mind misgave me.* I did knock, and his man in tears told me his master was dead an hour before. Think what grief this is to me! I could not dine with lord-treasurer, nor anywhere else, but got a bit of meat towards the evening. No loss ever grieved me so much; poor creature! Pray God Almighty bless you. Adieu. I send this away to-night, and am sorry it must go while I am in so much grief."

† He expresses himself to Stella on his hopes of preferment at first with great caution. 16th January, 1710-11. "It is the last sally I shall ever make, but I hope it will turn to some account. I have done more for these, and I think they

path, and the ministers were deficient in the power necessary to do in Swift's favour what we must suppose they had sincerely at heart. The real obstacle was the prejudice entertained by Queen Anne against the warmest literary supporter of her administration. All princes are necessarily educated in ceremonials and formalities, and those of weaker minds seldom can stir beyond their magic circle. Queen Anne was of the latter description, and was hence led to consider a breach of decorum, or a departure from professional character and etiquette, as equivalent to a heinous offence against morals. Swift was now to experience the truth of Atterbury's prophecy, made while the author of the "Tale of a Tub" was yet unknown. "He hath reason to conceal himself because of the profane strokes in that piece, which would do his reputation and interest in the world more harm than his wit can do him good." While the author was generally accounted a Whig, Sharpe, Archbishop of York, who was in many respects Queen Anne's spiritual counsellor, conceived he was at once discharging his conscience and serving the high church party, by painting the "Tale of a Tub" as a ridicule upon religion in general, and the writer as little better than an infidel, who at once had disgraced his sacred order by profligate levity, and sapped the foundations of revealed religion: a scoffer, in short, and a deist, altogether undeserving of church preferment. This was a mode of reasoning, which, besides that the first part of the charge was not actually void of truth, was otherwise exactly adapted to the capacity and temper of a princess, who alleged as one reason for changing her prime minister, that he had appeared before her in a tie-wig instead of a full bottom. The prejudice which Sharpe's representation excited, appears to have been deeply imprinted upon the queen's mind from the beginning of Harley's administration. For although the lord-treasurer proposed as a natural consequence of Swift's high favour with the ministers, that he should be presented to the queen, yet the introduction was delayed, and at length laid aside, without any reason being assigned,* a circumstance which plainly implied, that the queen declined so far to grace the author of the "Tale of a Tub." But if the reasoning or importunity of the ministers could have overcome the scruples of the queen in this particular, Swift's imprudent zeal in their behalf, had roused against him a more

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are more honest than the last: however, I will not be disappointed. I would make M. D. and me easy, and I never desired more. My new friends are very kind, and I have promises enough, but I do not count upon them." May 23rd, 1711. "To return without some mark of distinction, would look extremely little, and I would likewise gladly be somewhat richer than I am." From a passage, July 1st, 1711, it would seem Stella had grown impatient, had expressed regret at his journey, and considered him as ill used by ministers, for he says in their vindication, "I had no offers of any living. Lord Keeper told me some months ago, he would give me one when I pleased, but I told him I would not take any from him, and the secretary told me the other day, he had refused a very good one for me; but it was in a place he did not like, and I know nothing of getting anything here, and if they would give me leave, I would come over just now."

* The ministers expressed a resolution that Swift should preach before the queen, and Harley mentioned his intention of introducing him. But neither of

formidable enemy than the Archbishop of York, and passions much more irritable and vindictive than mere zeal for clerical decorum. Queen Anne, jealous of again being subjected to the domination of a single favourite, which had been so severely exercised by the Duchess of Marlborough, now divided her confidence betwixt Mrs. Masham, the patroness of the Tories, and the Duchess of Somerset, who was inclined towards the opposite faction; and with the petty craft of a weak mind, amused herself by balancing the strength of the contending parties against each other, in order that both might be sensible of their dependence on her personal favour. Swift, although perfectly aware that such was the queen's line of policy, and that the rude shocks which the ministers received in the House of Lords arose entirely from the influence of the Duchess of Somerset, was rash enough to suppose that the evil could be remedied, by holding up the favourite, whose secret influence was so powerful, as an object of satirical contempt. With this view, and using the same medium of satire which had been successful in the case of the sapient Partridge, and of Merlin's prediction, he wrote the "Windsor Prophecy." In that satire the duchess is ridiculed for the redness of her hair, and upbraided as having been privy to the murder of her first husband. It may be doubted which imputation she accounted the most cruel insult, especially since the first charge was undeniable, and the second only arose from the malice of the poet. The prophecy was printed and about to be published, but Mrs. Masham, more alive than the ministers to the danger of offending the queen, prevented this consummation of Swift's imprudence. The impression was nevertheless brought to the club of Brothers; and as each of the sixteen members took twelve copies, it was, to use a legal phrase, so complete an utterance, as altogether to defeat the purpose of Mrs. Masham's caution.* Having thus given mortal offence to a favourite, of whom he has himself recorded, that she had more personal credit than all the queen's servants put together; Swift was not long of feeling the effects of her resentment. He remained stationary, like a champion in a tale of knight-errantry, when, having surmounted all apparent difficulties, an invisible but irresistible force prevents him from the full accomplishment of the adventure. The promises of the ministers

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these incidents took place. January, 1710-11. "Mr. Harley of late has said nothing of presenting me to the queen.—I was overseen when I mentioned it to you. He has such a weight of affairs on him, that he cannot mind all; but he talked of it three or four times to me, long before I dropt it to you."

It has, however, been said, that the Dean received from the queen the beautiful seal with an Apollo and Pegasus. But this donation is extremely improbable, and the seal is mentioned in his will, as the gift of the Countess of Granville.

* Journal to Stella, 24th December, 1711. "My 'Prophecy' is printed, and will be published after Christmas Day. I like it mightily; I don't know how it will pass. I believe everybody will guess it to be mine, because it is somewhat in the same manner with that of Merlin, in the 'Miscellanies.'" 26th December. "I called at noon at Mrs. Masham's, who desired me not to let the 'Prophecy' be published, for fear of angering the queen about the Duchess of Somerset; so I wrote

were in the meanwhile reiterated, and doubtless with the sincere purpose of their fulfilment. An opportunity occurred of making them good, by appointing Swift to the see of Hereford, which became vacant by the death of Dr. Humphry Humphreys, on the 20th November, 1712. There seems little doubt that the lord-treasurer recommended his friend to the vacant mitre; and a letter from Lord Bolingbroke, dated during the vacancy of the bishopric, certainly relates to the same proposal. It is warm, cordial, and friendly in the highest degree.* But the prejudice excited by the representations of the Archbishop of York, powerfully supported by the entreaties and tears of the Duchess of Somerset, prevailed against the united influence of ministers, who seldom united in anything, and the name of Swift was added to the list of clergymen recommended to Queen Anne for promotion in the church, against whom she stated her objection, that they were too violent in party.

At length he began to feel that his situation was awkward, and became desirous either of receiving some preferment suited to the figure which he had made in public life, or of taking permission to retire to Ireland, at the risk of sacrificing all future hope of preferment, and encountering what he equally dreaded, the condolence of

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to the printer to stop them. They have been printed, and given about, but not sold." And a little lower, he says, "I entertained our society at the Thatched House tavern to-day at dinner; but brother Bathurst sent for wine, the house affording none. The printer had not received my letter, and so he brought us a dozen a-piece of the 'Prophecy;' but I ordered him to part with no more. It is an admirable good one, and people are mad for it." From a letter to Mr. Tickell, written several years afterwards, Swift appears to have been fully aware of his imprudence, in suffering this piece to get abroad, and mentions it as a "thing which no friend would publish."

* Thursday morning, two o'clock, January 5, 1712-13. "Though I have not seen, yet I did not fail to write to lord-treasurer. Non tua res agitur, dear Jonathan; it is the treasurer's cause; it is my cause; it is every man's cause who is embarked on our bottom. Depend upon it, that I never will neglect any opportunity of showing that true esteem, that sincere affection, and honest friendship for you, which fill the heart of your faithful friend, BOLINGBROKE."

I conceive Hereford to have been the object in view for Swift, at this period, because the vacancy corresponds with the date of the above letter, and because it is twice mentioned by Swift, in his Journal, about the same period, 7th January, 1712-13. "The Bishop of Ossory will not be Bishop of Hereford, to the great grief of himself and wife." 20th January. "Our English bishopric is not yet disposed of." Upon the whole, I have no doubt that at this time occurred the incidents mentioned by Mr. Sheridan. "The ministers, he states, had recommended Swift to the queen, to fill a vacant bishopric. But the Duchess of Somerset, who entertained an implacable hatred against him, determined to move heaven and earth to prevent his promotion taking place. She first prevailed on the Archbishop of York to oppose it, whose remarkable expression to the queen was, 'That her majesty should be sure that the man whom she was going to make a bishop was a Christian.' But as he could give no better colour for this surmise, than that Swift was supposed to be the author of the 'Tale of a Tub,' the bishop was considered as acting officiously, out of too indiscreet a zeal, and his interposition was of no avail. The duchess then went in person to the queen, and, throwing herself on her knees, entreated, with tears in her eyes, that she would not give the bishopric

only console his pride by the consideration, that a bishop had been created against great opposition, and without any interest of his own, in order to make way for his gaining the best deanery in Ireland. It is remarkable, that, neither during the agitating period when this business was in dependence, nor at any other time, did Swift suffer himself to glance a sarcasm at Queen Anne, or at her memory.* And this is the more striking, as he seems to have lost patience with his friend Oxford, even while he was sensible he laboured all he could to overcome the prejudices against his character in the royal breast. This respectful moderation is a strong contrast to the offence which he afterwards expressed against Queen Caroline for much slighter neglect. But in the former case, Queen Anne's favour for the church, and for the ministers with whom Swift lived in such intimacy, seems to have subdued his resentment for her personal dislike.

The warrant for the Deanery of St. Patrick's was signed 23rd February, and Swift set out for Ireland early in June, 1713, to take possession of a preferment, which he always professed to consider as at best an honourable exile. It must have been indeed unexpected, that his unexampled court favour should all terminate in his obtaining a deanery in a kingdom remote from those statesmen who equally needed his assistance, and delighted in his society. Nor can we doubt that he was disappointed, as well as surprised, since at one time he

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* The following line can hardly be considered as an exception:—

> By an old [murderess?] pursued,
> A crazy prelate, and a *royal prude*.

In the same piece he mentions, in very different terms, the intrigues of Archbishop Sharpe and the Duchess of Somerset:—

> York is from Lambeth sent to tell the queen,
> A dangerous treatise writ against the spleen;
> Which by the style, the matter, and the drift,
> 'Tis thought could be the work of none but Swift.
> Poor York! the harmless tool of others' hate;
> He sues for pardon, and repents too late.
> Now angry Somerset her vengeance vows,
> On Swift's reproaches for her murdered spouse:
> From her red locks her mouth with venom fills,
> And thence into the royal ear distils.

It is remarkable, that, in two passages of his Journal to Stella, Swift intimates that the Archbishop of York had expressed a strong wish to be reconciled to him; but it does not appear that they ever met. Delany, after expressing his surprise that Swift should ever have been represented as an infidel, mentions, as if it consisted with his own knowledge, "It will be some satisfaction to the reader, as I doubt not it was to Swift, (though no reparation of the injury), to know that the archbishop lived to repent of this injury done to Swift, expressed great sorrow for it, and desired his forgiveness."—*Observations upon Lord Orrery's Remarks, &c.* p. 271.

those who might affect to pity him.* After sundry insinuations that the lord-treasurer showed more personal kindness than attention to his interest, he at length expressed himself positively determined to relinquish labouring in the service of the ministers. "I will contract," he says, "no more enemies, at least I will not embitter worse than I have already, till I have got under shelter, and the ministers know my resolution."† At this time three Irish deaneries, a canonry of Windsor, and other church-livings in England, chanced to be vacant. On being informed that the warrant for the deaneries was filled up without mention of his name, Swift immediately announced his positive purpose of retiring, desiring Mr. Lewis to inform the lord-treasurer that he took nothing ill of him, but his failure to inform him, as he promised to do, if he found the queen would do nothing for him; a remarkable passage, which shows that Swift was now fully sensible of the fatal influence which obscured his prospects of promotion. Thus pressed, Oxford, with the concurrence of the Duke of Ormond, then lord-lieutenant, proposed that Dr. Sterne should be removed to the bishopric of Dromore, in order to vacate for Swift that Deanery of St. Patrick's, the name of which has since become a classical sound, because connected with his memory. Sterne had no apparent interest of his own, and was rather obnoxious to the Duke of Ormond. The circumstance, therefore, of his being promoted to a higher dignity, while Swift, with all his influence, only gained that from which Sterne was removed, indicates a capitulation between the queen and her ministers, in which the latter, finding their influence too low to obtain a mitre for their candidate, were contented to compound by procuring his appointment to a wealthy deanery. A last effort was made by the joint interest of Oxford and Lady Masham, to exchange St. Patrick's for a prebendary of Windsor. But the remonstrances of the prime minister, and the entreaties, even the tears of the favourite, were unavailing; and Swift, galled by the difficulty which attended his promotion, could

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to Swift; at the same time presenting to her that excessively bitter copy of verses, which Swift had written against her, called, 'The Windsor Prophecy.' The queen, upon reading them, was stung with resentment at the very severe treatment which he had given to a lady, who was known to stand highly in her favour, and as a mark of her displeasure, passed Swift by, and bestowed the bishopric on another." The See of Hereford was given to Philip Bisse, translated from that of St. David's.

* 4th March, 1712-13. "Tisdal's a pretty fellow as you say; and when I come back to Ireland he will condole with me with abundance of secret pleasure. I believe I told you what he wrote to me, that 'I have saved England and he Ireland.' But I can bear that."

† 26th Dec. 1712. "I dined with lord-treasurer, who chid me for being absent three days. Mighty kind; less of civility, and more of interest." Feb. 1712-13. "He chides me if I stay away but two days together. What will this come to? Nothing. My grandmother used to say,

More of your lining,
And less of your dining."

held his services too essential to the administration, to allow them even to create him a bishop in Ireland.*

To the very last, he confesses he thought the ministry would not have parted with him, and could only conclude, that they had not the option of making a suitable provision for him in England.†

CHAPTER IV.

Swift takes possession of his Deanery—Is recalled to England to reconcile Harley and St. John—Increases in favour with Oxford—Engages again in political controversy—Writes the Public Spirit of the Whigs—A reward offered for the discovery of the Author—The dissensions of the ministers increase—Swift retires to the Country—Writes Thoughts on the Present State of affairs—Writes to Lord Oxford on his being Displaced—And retires to Ireland on the Queen's Death—His reception—His Society—The interest he displayed in the misfortune of his Friends.

THE biographers of Swift have differed in their account of Swift's reception as dean of St. Patrick's. According to Lord Orrery, it was unfavourable in the extreme. He was shunned by the better class, hissed, hooted, and even pelted by the rabble. This is contradicted by Delany and Sheridan, who argue on the improbability of his experiencing such affronts, when the high-church interest, which he had so ardently served, was still in its zenith. Indeed, there is no doubt, that Lord Orrery's account is greatly exaggerated, or rather that his lordship has confounded the circumstances which attended Swift's first reception, with those of his final retirement to his deanery after the death of the queen. Yet, even on his first arrival, his reception was far from cordial. Many, even among his own order, beheld with envy the Vicar of Laracor elevated by mere force of talents to a degree of power and consequence seldom attained by the highest dignitaries of the church; and they scarce forgave him for his success, even in the very negotiation of which they reaped the benefit. "I remit them," says Swift, with indignant contempt, "their first fruits of ingratitude, as freely as I got the others remitted to them." He had also more legitimate enemies. The violent Whigs detested him as an apostate from their party; the dissenters regarded his high-

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* Journal, May 29, 1711. "We hear your Bishop Hickman is dead; but nobody here will do anything for me in Ireland, so they may die as fast or as slow as they please." Hickman, Bishop of Derry, was succeeded by Dr. Hartstonge, translated from the See of Ossory.

† Journal, 18th April, 1713. "Neither can I feel joy at passing my days in Ireland; and I confess I thought the ministry would not let me go; *but perhaps they cannot help it.*"

church principles with dread and aversion ; and both had at that time considerable influence in the city of Dublin.

The temper and manners of Swift were ill qualified to allay these prejudices. In assuming his new offices, with perhaps too much an air of authority, he soon provoked opposition from the Archbishop of Dublin, and from his own chapter ; and he was thwarted and disappointed both in his arrangments with his predecessor, and in the personal promotions which he wished to carry through for his friends. Besides, he had returned to Ireland a dissatisfied, if not a disappointed man, neither hoping to give nor receive pleasure, and such unhappy expectations are usually the means of realizing themselves. His intimate friendship with Vanessa already embittered the pleasure of rejoining Stella; and it was therefore no wonder, that, after hurrying from Dublin to his retirement at Laracor, he should write to the former in the following strain of despondency.

"I staid but a fortnight in Dublin, very sick, and returned not one visit of a hundred that were made me; but all to the Dean and none to the Doctor. I am riding here for life; and I think I am something better. I hate the thoughts of Dublin, and prefer a field-bed, and an earthen-floor, before the great house there, which they say is mine."—"At my first coming, I thought I should have died with discontent, and was horribly melancholy while they were installing me, but it begins to wear off, and change to dulness." He writes Archbishop King in the same strain of discontented melancholy, and it is still more strongly expressed in his verses.

While Swift was in a state of seclusion, so different from the bustling scene in which he had been for three years engaged, he received from the Tory administration the most anxious summons, pressing his instant return to England. Swift had early observed to Harley and St. John, that the success and stability of their government depended upon their mutual confidence and regard for each other. But this was soon endangered by a variety of minute grounds of mistrust, as well as by the differing genius of these two statesmen. Oxford was slow, mysterious, and irresolute; St. John vehement, active, and irregularly ambitious. The former was desirous of engrossing from his colleague, not only the essentials of ministerial power, but all its outward show and credit; the latter was ambitious of sharing the honours, as well as the fatigues, of public employment. These dissensions sometimes smouldered in secret, sometimes burst out into open flame; were frequently suppressed, but never extinguished. The disunion became visible to Swift, so early as within the first six months of their administration,* and in about four months after it, it was apparent both to

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* Journal, 27th April, 1711. "I am heartily sorry to find my friend the secretary stand a little ticklish with the rest of the ministry ; there have been one or two disobliging things that have happened. I will, if I meet Mr. St. John alone on Sunday, tell him my opinion, and beg him to set himself right, else the consequences may be very bad, for I see not how they can well want him neither, and he would make a troublesome enemy."

friends and enemies.* While the increase of this unkindness became more and more apparent, Swift, at the risk of compromising his own influence with both, though his fortune appeared dependent on its subsistence, hesitated not to undertake the precarious and thankless office of mediating between them. In verse and in prose, by conversation and writing, by serious advice and jocular remonstrance, he endeavoured to alarm his powerful friends upon the hazards into which they were hurried by their dissensions. He reminded the minister, in the verses entitled "Atlas," of the danger of attempting to conduct the whole government, without the confidential assistance of his colleagues; with St. John he frankly expostulated upon the absolute necessity of his acting cordially with the lord-treasurer; and he was so far successful, upon more than one occasion, as to bring about a seeming and temporary reconciliation. But, ere he left England, the evil which he had twice patched up, as he expresses himself, with the hazard of all his credit, became more evident than ever; and he was scarce settled in Ireland, before an hundred letters from different quarters recalled him to resume the hopeless task of ineffectual mediation. He obeyed the call so hastily, that he did not even take leave of the Archbishop of Dublin, at which that prelate was so much offended, that he threatened to take measures for obliging Swift to reside at his deanery; and it was probably his influence, aided by the envy of the inferior clergy, that prevented Swift from being in his absence chosen prolocutor of the House of Convocation, an honour with which he would obviously have been much pleased, though he declined to solicit it.

Upon Swift's arrival at London, he found that the disagreement between the ministers approached near to an explosion, and that he himself was the only mutual friend who would venture to mediate between them. There is reason to think his remonstrances produced some temporary effect. Meanwhile, he was once more engaged in the general contest of politics, and was not long without experiencing some of the perils of that envenomed warfare.

Swift's principal antagonists, on this occasion, had both been old friends. The first was Burnet, whom, in an ironical preface to the Bishop of Sarum's introduction to the third volume of the History of the Reformation, he treats as one whom he delighted to insult; upbraiding the venerable champion, who had produced a pamphlet as a precursor of his folio, with his mighty haste to take the field as a skirmisher, "armed only with a pocket pistol, before his great blunderbuss could be got ready, his old rusty breast-plate scoured, and his cracked head-piece mended." It does not appear that Burnet ever noticed this harsh and disrespectful treatment, nor does Swift's name

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* "The Whigs whisper, that our new ministry differ among themselves, and they begin to talk out Mr. Secretary; they have some reasons for their whispers, although I thought it was a greater secret. I do not much like the posture of things; I always apprehended, that any falling out would ruin them, and so I have told them several times."

occur in that history of his own times, where he commemorates so many individuals of inferior note; and the Dean finally recorded the bishop's character as that of a man of generosity and good-nature, but who at last became party-mad, and saw Popery under every bush.

Swift's controversy with Steele was longer, fiercer, and attended by more serious consequences for both parties. We have given an account of their rupture, and it now was increased to a public controversy. In the "Guardian," No. 128, Steele had attacked the ministers for negligence in enforcing that stipulation of the treaty of Utrecht, which respected the demolition of Dunkirk, and being then about being elected Member of Parliament for Stockbridge, he pursued the subject in a pamphlet, entitled, "The Importance of Dunkirk Considered," in a letter to the bailiff of that borough. Swift, with less feeling of their ancient intimacy than of their recent quarrel, appears readily and eagerly to have taken up the gauntlet. His first insulting and vindictive answer is entitled "The Importance of the 'Guardian' Considered," in which the person, talents, history, and morals of his early friend are the subject of the most acrimonious raillery; and where he attempts to expose the presumption of Steele's pretensions to interfere in the councils of princes, whether as a publisher of "Tatlers" and "Spectators," and the occasional author of a "Guardian;" or from his being a soldier, alchemist, gazetteer, commissioner of stamped papers, or gentleman-usher. Besides this diatribe, there appeared two others, in which Swift seems to have had some concern;* and a ludicrous paraphrase on the first ode of the second book of Horace, in ridicule of Steele, which is entirely his composition. It is to Steele's honour, that although he appears to have rushed hastily, and without due provocation, into the quarrel with Swift, he did not condescend to retort these personalities. He was then engaged, with the assistance of Addison, Hoadley, Lechmere, and Marshall, in the composition of a pamphlet called the "Crisis," intended to alarm the public upon the danger of the Protestant succession, and the predominating power of France. This treatise was brought forward with a degree of pomp and parade, which its contents hardly warrant, being chiefly a digest of the Acts of Parliament respecting the succession, mixed with a few comments, of which the diction is neither forcible, elegant, nor precise; while, by the extraordinary exertions made to obtain subscriptions, it was plain that the relief of the author's necessities was the principal object of the publication. The opportunity did not escape Swift, who published his celebrated comment under the title of "The public spirit of the Whigs, set forth in their generous encouragement of the author of the 'Crisis;' with some observations on the seasonableness, candour, erudition, and style of that treatise." In this pamphlet, Steele was assailed by satire as personal and as violent as in the former. Still,

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* The "Character of Richard Steele, Esquire, with some remarks by Toby Abel's Kinsman, 1713," and "A Letter from the facetious Dr. Andrew Tripe at Bath, to the venerable Nestor Ironside, 1714."

however, he remained unmoved, and his only reply was moderate and dignified. In defence of himself and his writings, before the House of Commons, among several passages in former publications, from which he claimed the honours due to a friend of virtue, he quoted the favourable character given in the "Tatler" of the "Project for the Advancement of Religion," and of its author, with the following simple and manly comment: "The gentleman I here intended was Dr. Swift. This kind of man I thought him at that time: we have not met of late, but I hope he deserves this character still." As it seldom happens that two intimate friends can descend to personal altercation without possessing means of mutual reproach, most readers will be of opinion, that Steele's forbearance, under gross provocation, deserved a better requital than the severe verses, entitled, "John Dennis the Sheltering poet's invitation to Richard Steele, the secluded party-writer and member, to come and live with him in the Mint." Dennis's share of the satire was undoubtedly and amply deserved, by his own scurrilities against Swift, though the wit of the piece, as directed against Steele, is no apology for its cruelty. But, in political hostility, Swift had the attributes of Homer's champion—

> Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
> Jura negat sibi nata, nihil non arrogat armis.

Meanwhile, ere the controversy had ceased between those two eminent literary characters, the strong talons of power had well nigh pounced upon both, like the kite upon the puny duellists in the old fable.

Of Steele it is only necessary to say that, by the violence of a predominating majority, it was resolved that the papers called the "Sequel of the Englishman" and the "Crisis" were scandalous and seditious libels, and that Richard Steele, Esq., for his offence in writing them, be expelled the House of Commons. By a singular coincidence, his antagonist, Swift, experienced the frown of authority at the same juncture. About this time the Scottish peers were greatly displeased with the court, and their discontent was fomented by the celebrated John, Duke of Argyle, who now openly opposed the ministers with whom he had once acted. Steele, therefore, both in the "Englishman" and in the "Crisis," omitted no opportunity of panegyrizing the Scottish nation, and extolling the wisdom of the Union. Swift, who disliked the Scots, and had quarrelled with Argyle, did not lose an opportunity of feeding full his grudge against both. In the "Public Spirit of the Whigs," the Scots are characterized as "a poor, fierce, northern people;" the Union treated rather as a measure of state-necessity, flowing out of the Scottish act of security, than as that which was of itself desirable; and the Duke of Argyle was glanced at as one of those Scottish nobles who appeared to be very zealous for dissolving the Union, although their whole revenues before that period would have ill maintained a Welsh justice of peace; and although they had since gathered more money than any Scotsman who had not travelled could form an idea of. It was besides stated, that the number

of the Scottish nobility, joined to their poverty, was a great and necessary evil of the Union, and that to account it a benefit, as Steele had done in the "Crisis," were as if, when a person of quality had married a portionless woman of inferior rank, it should be maintained as an advantage that she brought him as numerous a family of relations and servants as he had of his own. These expressions were highly resented in the upper House of Parliament. Lord Wharton, who certainly owed Swift little favour, made complaint to the House, and, being joined by a majority, the lord-treasurer was obliged to temporize and disown the pamphlet, and reprobate the expressions complained of. The offensive passage, which occupied about four pages, was hastily cancelled in the second edition; but this *amende honorable* had nearly come too late. Morphew the bookseller, and Barber the printer, were ordered into custody of the black rod. The former declared he knew nothing of the author, and Barber refused to answer any questions that might criminate himself. But Wharton, exclaiming that the House had nothing to do with the bookseller or printer, farther than they could be made the instruments of discovering "the villainous author of that false and scandalous libel," proposed that Barber and his servants should be closely examined, and freed from those personal consequences, which they alleged as a reason for declining to give an answer. But the *finesse* of the ministers prevented a course of proceeding which must have led to the discovery of Swift. They directed a prosecution against Barber personally, which rendered it impossible to examine him in evidence against the author.* The resentment of the peers, and particularly of the Scottish nobles, was rather increased than allayed by this pretended sacrifice, which they considered in its true light of an evasion. The latter went in a body to the queen, headed by the Duke of Argyle, and required that, in satisfaction for the affront which they had sustained, a proclamation should be issued, offering a reward for discovery of the author of the alleged libel. The same was moved by Wharton in the House of Lords; and a proclamation, proposing a reward of 300*l.* was issued accordingly. No one was in doubt as to the real author; but Swift, conscious of the protection of Oxford, exhibited no symptoms of alarm, though shunned by many of his former friends, who now conceived him to be singled out for prosecution

* This is the transaction to which Swift alludes in the lines upon himself, the concluding line of which former biographers have not explained particularly:—

> "Now through the realm a proclamation spread
> To fix a price on his devoted head,
> While innocent he scorns ignoble flight,
> His watchful friends preserve him by a s'*eight*."

It appears, however, that Swift did meditate flight in case discovery had taken place. In the letter to his friend in Ireland about renewing his licence of absence, dated 29th July, 1714, he says, "I was very near wanting it some months ago with a witness," which can only allude to the possibility of his being obliged to abscond.

Meantime Lord Oxford indemnified Morphew and Barber by a sum of money (150*l.*), sent anonymously to Swift for the purpose of being conveyed to them; quashed, it would seem, the offer of a private informer to discover the author of the libel, provided he could be assured of the reward; and finally, by discharge of the prosecution against Barber, when the clamour excited by the pamphlet was somewhat abated, consigned the whole matter to oblivion.

Swift's favour with the lord-treasurer, Oxford, had now ripened into the closest intimacy. How dearly Swift loved that statesman, in whom there were many qualities deserving of such attachment, appears from a thousand expressions in his letters and journal. The despair which he expresses at his being wounded by Guiscard is like that of a brother mourning for a brother. Swift retained to his dying day, as a sacred relic, the penknife with which the wound was inflicted;* and it would seem, that, on one occasion, he secured his friend's life from a dangerous attempt of the same kind, at the hazard of his own.

This strange accident made much noise at the time, but has been unnoticed by Swift's numerous biographers. While the lord-treasurer was dressing, a packet was delivered, the appearance of which excited the suspicion of Swift. He opened it with great precaution, and it was found to contain, according to the first account, three pistols cocked and charged, with a string attached so as to discharge them when the box should be opened. But afterwards the three pistols proved to be the barrels of large ink-horns filled with powder, connected with a pistol-lock for striking fire. This story was ridiculed by the Whigs, under the name of the band-box plot, and they did not hesitate to allege that Swift, the lucky discoverer, was also the ingenious deviser of the machine. But if the imputation had been just, there seems no reason why he should have disgraced his contrivance by the use of such ridiculous implements, since, though he had employed real pistols, he might easily have avoided danger in opening a box of which he knew the contents beforehand. Swift has himself assured Stella, that his life was actually in danger, and that he had saved that of the minister; and there appears no good reason for refusing our belief to both assertions. The attempt of Guiscard, and a much more melancholy and unfortunate example of our own time, may serve to convince us, that the life of a first minister may be endangered or destroyed by attempts as improbable as atrocious.

Swift was trusted by Oxford in his private as well as public affairs. He was supposed to have assisted in the negotiations which preceded

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* Mr. Deane Swift has thus described the weapon:—

"I have seen," says Mr. Swift, "the pen-knife, with a tortoiseshell handle, and when shut it was just about the length of a man's little finger. But, as the blade was broken within half an inch of the handle, by the violence of the blow, against one of the ribs of the earl, the doctor had a hole drilled through that part of the blade which was broken off, and another hole through that part of the piece which remained in the handle, and by that contrivance they were both held together by a little silver chain."

the alliance between the lord-treasurer's eldest son, and the only child of the Duke of Newcastle, and in the arrangements which followed for division of the duke's inheritance betwixt her and Lord Pelham, the male-heir. This was a point which Oxford had so greatly at heart, that Bolingbroke afterwards termed it the ultimate end of his administration. Swift, upon this joyful occasion, wrote the poetical address to Lord Harley on his marriage. But his sympathetic friendship is still more deeply manifested in his letter to the lord-treasurer, on the death of his daughter, the Marchioness of Caermarthen, than which there is nothing in the English language more beautifully and feelingly expressed. And the constancy of his attachment, at the most distressing period of Oxford's life, was such as well made good the manly expressions of regard with which, on retiring from London, he bade his lordship farewell. "When I was with you, I have said, more than once, that I would never allow quality or station made any real difference between men. Being now absent and forgotten, I have changed my mind: you have a thousand people who can pretend they love you, with as much appearance of sincerity as I; so that, according to common justice, I can have but a thousandth part in return of what I give. And this difference is wholly owing to your station. And the misfortune is still the greater, because I loved you so much the less for your station; for, in your public capacity, you have often angered me to the heart; but, as a private man, never once."

The favour of Swift appears now to have been greater than ever, and most of the Irish affairs of consequence were determined by his advice and opinion. It was the general opinion, that he would soon be promoted to a bishop's see: and Lord Nottingham, on whom he had reflected severely in many of his satirical productions, took an opportunity of retaliation when the celebrated Schism Bill was depending in the House of Lords. Adverting particularly to an enactment, that all teachers of youth should be licensed by the bishop or archbishop of the diocese, he proceeded thus:—"My Lords, I have many children, and I know not whether God Almighty will vouchsafe to let me live to give them the education I could wish they had; therefore, my Lords, I own I tremble when I think that a certain divine, who is hardly suspected of being a Christian (meaning, as we read in the annals, Dr. Swift,) is in a fair way of being a bishop, and may one day give licence to those who shall be intrusted with the instruction of youth." And it appears from different passages in his correspondence, that the hopes of Swift's friends coincided with the fears of his enemies, respecting his expected promotion; and that there were expectations held out of a living in Yorkshire, to be obtained through the influence of Lord Keeper Harcourt. These hopes and fears, however, were so far disappointed, that Swift failed in obtaining a boon of much less consequence, though then essential to his comfortable settlement in life.

The debts which he was obliged to incur at entering upon his deanery were very considerable, amounting to at least a thousand pounds an expense which he was unprepared to undergo. He therefore seems

to have considered himself entitled, when accepting a promotion so much beneath the character in which he had acted, to be at least indemnified of the charges of induction;* and, in his own peculiar manner, he stated that the queen should either pay up this debt for him, or hang him, since he had deserved the one or the other.

The lord-treasurer, with his usual procrastination, or from motives of public economy, jested on the subject, but did nothing, and Swift's situation must have been embarrassing to any one of less determined prudence. On his return to England, after his instalment, he addressed to Oxford that celebrated and beautiful imitation of Book I. epistle vii. and sat. vi. Book II. of Horace, with which every reader must be familiar. The intention was to complain of the expenses attending his preferment,

> All vexations,
> Patents, instalments, abjurations,
> First-fruits, and tenths, and chapter-treats,
> Dues, payments, fees, demands, and cheats,
> The wicked laity's contriving,
> To hinder clergymen from thriving.

It contains even a more plain intimation of his difficulties.

> Poor Swift, with all his losses vext,
> Not knowing where to turn him next,
> Above a thousand pounds in debt,
> Takes horse——

As well as

> Lewis, the Dean will be of use;
> Send for him up, take no excuse;
> Or let it cost five hundred pound,
> No matter where the money's found,
> It is but so much more in debt,
> And that they ne'er consider'd yet.

All these hints of the loss he was actually sustaining, seem to have been lost upon Oxford, and only attracted Bolingbroke's attention, at a time when his power was tottering, and his favour inefficient. Swift's solicitude on this subject, has been quoted as derogating from the high

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*Journal, April 23, 1713. "I thought I was to pay but 600*l.* for the house, but the Bishop of Clogher says 800*l.*; first-fruits, 150*l.*; and so, with patent, 1000*l.* in all; so that I shall not be the better for the deanery these three years. I hope in some time they will be persuaded to give me some money here to clear off these debts. I will finish the book I am writing, before I can go over, and they expect I shall pass next winter here, and then I will drive them to give me a sum of money."

Again, 16th May, 1713. "I shall be ruined, or at least sadly cramped, unless the Queen will give me a thousand pounds. I am sure she owes me a great deal more. Lord-treasurer rallies me upon it, and I believe intends it, but *quando?*" In a letter to Lord Keeper Harcourt, May, 1713, he hints at the same subject: "Lord-treasurer uses me barbarously, appoints to carry me to Kensington, and makes me walk four miles at midnight. He laughs when I mention a thousand pound which he gives me, though a thousand pounds is a very serious thing."

tone of independence assumed by him, on refusing the sum formerly offered by the treasurer; and it has been alleged that both cases were exactly parallel, unless in so far as the amount made a difference. But it must be considered, that three years' public services had been remunerated with a professional situation of no common description of dignity indeed, and future emolument, but attended in the meantime with such an immediate expense, as must have embarrassed, for life perhaps, a man of less economy, and which reduced Swift to great temporary inconvenience. The grant of a sum of money, therefore, to render a preferment, which in every respect was beneath his pretensions, instantly productive and effectual, could no more be considered as an eleemosynary gratuity, than the acceptance of the deanery itself could be termed inconsistent with his having refused to be Lord Oxford's chaplain. Such grants have frequently been made in every department of the public service, and differ widely from the secret service-money doled out to party-writers from time to time, in proportion to the satisfaction which they afford to their patrons.

In another particular Swift was to undergo disappointment. He was still busy with his "History of the Peace of Utrecht," and became disposed to extend it into a general account of Queen Anne's reign. With the view of obtaining access to materials, and perhaps of gratifying a wish long since entertained, he was desirous to be named historiographer. The appointment is in the gift of the lord high chamberlain. But Swift, who seems to have had some reason for disliking the Duke of Shrewsbury, whom he terms a person of no steadiness or sincerity, and by whom the office was held, endeavoured to supersede the necessity of applying to him, by presenting a direct memorial to Queen Anne. His experience in courts might have taught him the jealousy entertained of official patronage, but he probably conceived, that his influence with ministers would surmount, in his particular case, all obstacles arising from it. He was mistaken. Oxford and Bolingbroke, each busied in preparing for an impending struggle, did not choose to excite the chamberlain's dislike, by encroaching on his rights of office; and Shrewsbury, to whom Swift made no personal application, filled up the situation with a dependent of his own.

The dissensions among the ministers seem to have interrupted the meetings of the society of Brothers. But Swift had formed, in its stead, the celebrated Scriblerus Club, an association rather of a literary, than a political character. Oxford and St. John, Swift, Arbuthnot, Pope, and Gay, were the members. It was the well-known object of their united powers, to compose a satire upon the abuse of human learning. Part of their labours has been preserved in the "Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus," which gave name to the society, and part has been rendered immortal by the "Travels of Lemuel Gulliver;" but the violence of political faction, like a storm that spares the laurel no more than the cedar, dispersed this little band of literary brethren, and prevented the accomplishment of a task for which talents so various, so extended, and so brilliant, can never again be united.

Oxford and Bolingbroke, themselves accomplished scholars, patrons and friends both of the persons and of the genius thus associated, led the way, by their mutual animosity, to the dissolution of the confraternity. Their discord had now arisen to the highest pitch, and was scarce veiled under the thin forms of official intercourse. Swift again tried the force of humorous expostulation in his fable of the Fagot, where the ministers are called upon to contribute their various badges of office, to make the bundle strong and secure. With infinite delicacy the poet omitted all mention of Bolingbroke; the animosity between Oxford and him was too rankling a wound to endure being tickled. But all was in vain; and at length, tired of this scene of murmuring and discontent, quarrel, misunderstanding, and hatred, the Dean, who was almost the only common friend who laboured to compose these differences, made a final effort, of which the result shall be given in his own words to Lord Oxford, son of the statesman: "When I returned to England, I found their quarrels and coldness increased. I laboured to reconcile them as much as I was able; I contrived to bring them to my lord Masham's, at St. James's. My Lord and Lady Masham left us together. I expostulated with them both, but could not find any good consequences. I was to go to Windsor next day with my lord-treasurer: I pretended business that prevented me; expecting they would come to some [reconciliation]. But I followed them to Windsor, where my Lord Bolingbroke told me, that my scheme had come to nothing. Things went on at the same rate: they grew more estranged every day. My lord-treasurer found his credit daily declining. In May before the queen died, I had my last meeting with them at my Lord Masham's. He left us together; and therefore I spoke very freely to them both, and told them, 'I would retire, for I found all was gone.' Lord Bolingbroke whispered me, 'I was in the right.' Your father said, 'All would do well.' I told him, 'That I would go to Oxford on Monday, since I found it was impossible to be of any use.'"

Nothing, indeed, was now left for Swift, but to execute the resolution he had repeatedly announced, of retreating from the scene of discord, without taking part with either of his contending friends. He set out for Oxford on the Monday succeeding his ineffectual interview, and from thence went to the house of the Reverend Mr. Gery at Upper Letcombe, Berkshire, where he resided for some weeks in the strictest seclusion. His feeling of this melancholy change, from all that was busy and gay, to the dulness and uniformity of a country vicarage, is expressed in a letter to Miss Vanhomrigh. The secession of Swift from the political world excited the greatest surprise—the public wondered—the party writers exulted in a thousand ineffectual libels, discharged against the retreating champion of the high church—and his friends conjured him in numerous letters, to return and reassume the task of a peacemaker. This he positively declined, but he seems to have meditated the extraordinary plan of an appeal to the public, at least to the Tory part at large, against those errors on which the administration seemed splitting asunder.

With this view, he composed the "Free Thoughts on the State of Public Affairs," in which it is remarkable, that, although he loved Oxford far better than Bolingbroke, and indeed better than any other man who lived, yet almost the whole censure expressed in the piece falls to the share of that statesman. His affectation of mystery, his want of confidence in his colleagues, his temporizing with the opposite party, and maintaining many of the Whigs in office, are noticed at length, and with some severity. The infatuation of the internal dissension of the ministers, compared to a ship's crew quarrelling in a storm, or when within gun-shot of the enemy, is the only particular in which Bolingbroke shares the blame with Oxford. The measures recommended as a remedy for the imminent danger, are such as suited the headlong audacity of the former, rather than the slow and balancing policy of Harley. These are, 1st, to achieve a complete predominance of the Tory party, by an absolute exclusion of the dissenters, termed the open enemies of the Church of England, from every degree of power, civil or military; a disqualification to be extended likewise to all Whigs and low-churchmen, affirmed to be her secret adversaries, unless promotion be earned by a sincere reformation. This great work was to be accompanied by a new modelling of the army, especially of the royal guards, which are pronounced fitter, in their existing state, to guard a prince to the bar of a high-court of justice, than to secure him on the throne. 2ndly, After a thorough, and doubtless a sincere disavowal, of the exiled branch of the House of Stuart, it is strongly recommended that all secret intercourse between any party in England and the court of Hanover be broken off; that the visits of the presumptive heir, and his claims to be called to Parliament, be no longer pressed upon the queen without her permission; and that the electoral prince should be required to declare his utter dislike of factious persons and principles, more especially of the party who affected to be peculiarly zealous for his rights, and to avow himself entirely satisfied with her majesty's proceedings at home and abroad. This was bold, daring, uncompromising counsel, better suited to the genius of him who gave it than to that of the British nation, and most likely, if followed, might have led to civil war. The treatise was, however, sent by Swift to his friend Charles Ford, and, with great precaution, through a circuitous channel, and under a feigned name, transmitted by him to Barber the printer. Barber, being patronized by Bolingbroke, showed the manuscript, upon his own authority, to that statesman, who lost no time in making such additions and alterations, as were calculated to render it still more unfavourable to Oxford, and more suitable to his own political intrigues. On learning that such alterations were made, Swift, whose intention it had ever been to preserve the most perfect neutrality betwixt his great friends, and, if possible, to reunite them, but by no means to assist the one to the prejudice of the other, commissioned Ford to demand back the manuscript. It was recovered from the secretary of state and the typographer, after some hesitation, delay, and difficulty. And thus the

publication of this tract, which undoubtedly might have produced a great, though perhaps a dangerous effect, at that critical period, was laid entirely aside. He seems to have meditated another political pamphlet at the same time, apparently the memoirs relating to the change of ministry in 1710. But it must have been in somewhat a different form from that in which it was finally published.

Meantime every post brought Swift, from various quarters, and with varying comments, accounts of the successful intrigues of Bolingbroke. It is curious to compare the differing lights in which the same facts are placed by his correspondents, as affected by their own feelings or interest. Lewis adheres to the falling fortunes of Oxford—Ford seems half disposed to worship the apparently rising star of Bolingbroke—Arbuthnot, like Swift, blames both, and laments the consequences of their division. Bolingbroke himself omitted no means of conciliating Swift to the revolution which he was about to accomplish in the cabinet. He wrote to the Dean in the kindest terms of friendship; and when Arbuthnot reminded him of the memorial for the post of historiographer, he exclaimed, that to have suffered Swift, who had deserved so well of them, to have the least uneasy thought about such matters, would be among the eternal scandals of their government. His good intentions, however, were in that case frustrated, as the lord chamberlain had, three weeks before, bestowed the office upon another. But, to manifest his own zeal for Swift's interest, Bolingbroke caused an order on the treasury to be signed by the queen for the thousand pounds which Swift had in vain solicited from Oxford, and this he did during his short ministry of three days. The warrant, indeed, was rendered nugatory by the queen's death, but the goodwill of St. John was equally manifested. At the same time Lady Masham, by whose secret influence Oxford had been displaced, wrote to conjure Swift, by his charity and compassion for the queen, not to desert her cause at this crisis, but to stay, and be assured his advice would not be thrown away on thankless and indifferent ears. Barber also was commissioned by Bolingbroke to inform Swift he would reconcile him with the Duchess of Somerset, place him on a right footing with the queen, and, what perhaps might have been an equal temptation, that it was intended to comply with his advice by making a complete sweep of those Whigs who had been left in office. These flattering proposals seemed to be attended with instant benefit, and to open a prospect full upon the path of honour, ambition, and preferment. But almost the same post brought an affecting letter from Lord Oxford, the disgraced minister, now going alone to his country seat in Herefordshire, and requesting Swift, if he had not tired him in their former *tête-à-tête* parties, to throw away so much time on one who loved him, as to attend him upon this melancholy journey. To Swift's immortal honour, he paused not a moment, but wrote to solicit a renewal of his licence for absence, then on the point of expiring, not that he might share the triumph and prospects to which he was invited by the royal favourite and the new prime-minister, but in order to accompany his

beloved friend and patron to neglect and seclusion. "I meddle not with his faults, as he was a minister of state," are his manly expressions; "but you know his personal kindness to me was excessive; he distinguished and chose me above all men when he was great; and his letter to me the other day was the most moving imaginable." It lessens not the merit of this sacrifice, that, within three days, fate closed the prospects of the Tory party by the death of Queen Anne, when the accession of George I. confounded the triumphant Bolingbroke and the disgraced Oxford in common peril and proscription.

Swift, under a shock sudden and overwhelming to his party in general, and deeply fraught with personal hatred to so active a partizan as himself, lost neither presence of mind, courage, nor perseverance. He gave the bold opinion, that it was yet possible to rally the Tories, providing common misfortune could unite those whom success had separated. He exhorted Bolingbroke to place himself at the head of the high-church party; and, like a veteran who assumes his arms to succour in peril the standard from which he had retired while it was victorious, he offered his own services in the field of political contest in the beginning of winter. It was on this occasion that Arbuthnot used the memorable expression—"Dean Swift keeps up his noble spirit, and, though like a man knocked down, you may behold him still with a stern countenance, and aiming a blow at his adversaries." But the spirit of the Tories was totally broken, as is well described in a desponding letter of Lewis. And on the subject of reconciliation, Bolingbroke avowed such an inveteracy of hatred against Oxford, that he would rather have laid down his own life, than made common cause with him in defending that of both. His flight, and that of Ormond, with the imprisonment of Oxford, Wyndham, Prior, and others, completed the discomfiture and dispersion of Queen Anne's last ministry. These events took place when Swift himself, under the frown of power, had sought refuge in Ireland from the evils and dangers which impended over all the late ministers, and their adherents.

It was now he experienced that height of unpopularity which the narrative of Lord Orrery has somewhat anticipated. The Irish Protestants, remembering the civil wars of 1689 and 1690, looked with utter abhorrence on all who were suspected of being favourable to the interest of the house of Stuart. This was the charge brought against Queen Anne's last ministry by their successors; it was countenanced by a remarkable passage in the declaration of the Chevalier de St. George, expressing the good intentions of his sister in his favour, when prevented by death; and, if limited to Bolingbroke's intrigues, that statesman's subsequent conduct, as well as Ormond's, give it great probability. But the spirit of party made no distinction. All who had favoured the high-church interest were involved in a sweeping charge of Jacobitism, of which calumny Swift had his share. Libels on libels were showered against him; the rabble insulted him as he walked the street; and even young men of rank forgot his station and their own so far as to set the same example of wanton brutality. Nor

principles, nor any wish for a restoration of the Stuart line. It is true that, to be even the apologist of these unfortunate persons, might, in the rigorous judgment of more zealous partizans, misbecome one who professed himself a Whig, though without modern refinements. If this be judged an inconsistency, it must be considered as one of those which frequently occur from the accidental collision of human passions with political principle. But, excepting in these momentary flashes of satire, if we examine the whole tenor of Swift's life, writings, and opinions, there cannot be an action, or line, or sentiment derived from his history, writings, or letters, to countenance the charge of Jacobitism with which he was at this period of his life so generally slandered.

The imputation of disaffection has often the same effect with the reality, especially in a provincial capital, where the retainers of party endeavour to supply their deficiency in real importance, by zeal, clamour, and intolerance. Swift seems, therefore, for some time, to have been secluded from the society of the great, powerful, and distinguished; and the companion of Oxford and Bolingbroke, of Prior, Pope, Gay, had to select his society from the men of kindred taste in his own order, with a few of more elevated rank, who either had the sense and spirit to "forsake politics for wit," or were not disinclined to high-church politics. Delany has enumerated several of these in a passage, where he repels with equal success and indignation, the assertion of Orrery, that Swift delighted in company of low rank, and parasitical manners. He mentions, as Swift's principal companions, the Grattans, seven brethren of high honour, in their various walks of life,* as generally acquainted, and as much beloved as any family in England, their ally, the Rev. Mr. Jackson, George Rochfort, and Peter Ludlow, both gentlemen of accomplishments, and, what Lord Orrery might think more material, of good birth, and easy fortune. He also enumerates Dr. Walmsley, Dr. Helsham, Dr. Sheridan, Mr. Stopford, afterwards Bishop of Cloyne, and himself; and what he says of Rochfort and Ludlow, may apply to most of Swift's society. "Greater companions he might have conversed with, but better he neither did, nor could."

Amusing his leisure in this society, Swift had yet too much time remaining to reflect on his own disappointments, and the calamity of those who had lately been engaged with him on the public stage.

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* The eldest lived on his paternal fortune. One was a physician, one a merchant, and afterwards lord mayor of Dublin; one was head master of a free-school, with a large appointment, and the remaining three were clergymen. "Do you not know the Grattans?" said Swift to Lord Carteret, when he came over as lord-lieutenant; "then pray obtain their acquaintance. The Grattans, my lord, can raise 10,000 men." This was one of the instances in which Swift showed his desire of enhancing the importance of his friends. He alluded to the great popularity of the family, and Carteret seems to have found his report just, since Dr. Grattan was named physician to the lord-lieutenant and his family. He wrote to the Duke of Dorset concerning the Grattans, making use of the same phrase.

was this the worst evil of his situation.* His former friends, including many who owed him civility and gratitude, paid court to the opposite party, by treating him with rudeness and insult. He was obliged to secure his papers against the researches of government; and it would seem that a packet, addressed to him from the Duke of Ormond's chaplain, was seized by a messenger. The slight authority upon which it is affirmed, that Dean Swift actually absconded, lest he should be made answerable for the treasonable contents, may justly be neglected, since no steps were taken against a man so obnoxious to government, who would scarcely have been overlooked, had there occurred any grounds on which he could be made personally responsible. That he was considered, however, as a person disaffected, and liable to accusation, is evident from an expression of his old correspondent, Archbishop King, who seems to have yielded to no one in the art of conveying a sarcasm under the mask of a friendly wish or amicable caution. "We have a strong report that my Lord Bolingbroke will return here and be pardoned: certainly it must not be for nothing. I hope he can tell no ill story of you." This unfriendly hint the Dean repels with the most indignant spirit. "I should be sorry," he commences, "to see my Lord Bolingbroke following the trade of an informer, because he is a person for whom I have always had, and still continue, a very great love and esteem. And as to myself, if I were of any importance, I should be very easy under such an accusation, much easier than I am to think your grace imagines me in any danger. I am surprised your grace could think, or act, or correspond with me for some years past, while you must needs believe me a most false and vile man, declaring to you, on all occasions, my abhorrence of the Pretender, and yet privately engaged with a ministry to bring him in. I always professed to be against the Pretender, and am so still. And this is not to make my court, which I know is vain, for I own myself full of doubts, fears, and dissatisfactions, which I think on as seldom as I can: yet, if I were of any value, the public may safely rely on my loyalty, because I look upon the coming of the Pretender as a greater evil than any we are likely to suffer, under the worst Whig ministry that can be found."

It would be in vain to waste more words on this accusation, excepting that no one had more reason to dread the accession of a Catholic prince than the determined champion of the Church of England; nor could a counter-revolution, which must have been achieved by foreign aid, and supported by arbitrary and military authority, have been so odious to any one as to the resolved and undaunted defender of the liberties of Ireland. His manuscript Notes upon Addison's Freeholder, a paper designed to support the government during the insurrection of 1715, indicate, indeed, compassion for the insurgents, and no great respect for the reigning family, but intimate no approbation of the Jacobite

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* Such disgraceful occurrences occasioned him to address a petition to the House of Lords, on the wanton aggression of one of their members.

Like a seaman wrecked upon a solitary island, we find him constantly lamenting the misfortunes and danger of the associates from whom he was divided,—longing for their society,—undervaluing, in his grief for their separation, the safety and the solitude which had fallen to his own lot. His thoughts were ever turning to "his friends in exile, or the Tower," nor did he omit all that was in his power to manifest his sympathy with their distress, at every risk to his own person and fortune. He corresponded with Lord Bolingbroke, even while in banishment, through bad report, and good report. He offered consolation to Lady Masham, and to the yet more unfortunate Duchess of Ormond. But to Oxford, his patron and his friend, then imprisoned in the Tower, and threatened with impeachment for high treason, Swift manifested that affection which only generous and noble minds can feel, and which glows highest when it most compromises the safety of him by whom it is displayed. He claimed it as his right to offer his service and attendance during his friend's imprisonment—he entreated it as a boon: "It is the first time," are his striking words, "I ever solicited you in my own behalf, and if I am refused, it will be the first request you ever refused me." Oxford seems to have declined an offer, which, without being useful to him, could only have involved a noble and disinterested friend in suspicion and danger. But the generosity and self-devotion by which it was dictated, should be equally remembered in Swift's favour, and silence for ever the obscure and unproved calumnies, which are inconsistent with the very nature of such a mind. He writes to Pope in this melancholy strain, "You know how well I loved both Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke, and how dear the Duke of Ormond is to me: Do you imagine I can be easy while their enemies are endeavouring to take off their heads? *I nunc, et versus tecum meditare canoros.*"—And after an account of his living in the most secluded manner with a few servants, in the corner of a vast unfurnished house, he describes his amusements to be the task of defending his small dominions against the archbishop, and endeavouring to reduce his rebellious choir. *Perditur*, is the melancholy summing up, *perditur inter hæc misero lux.*

If it be possible that any one should peruse these pages, to whom the wayward history of Swift's domestic misfortunes are altogether unknown, such a reader may be surprised, that, endowed with a competence which his economy was speedily increasing into opulence, he had not now at length relieved the tedium of celibacy, and diverted his painful reflections upon public affairs, and the fate of his friends, by seeking domestic comfort and society in an union with Stella, who had forsaken England on his account, and towards whom so much affection is expressed in the earlier part of his journal. But the fate of a third person was now entwined with theirs, and the misfortunes which followed must be the subject of an uninterrupted narrative.

CHAPTER V.

Swift's first Acquaintance with Miss Vanhomrigh—She follows him to Ireland—Swift's Marriage with Stella—Death of Miss Vanhomrigh—Poem of Cadenus and Vanessa—Swift's Studies during his retirement from 1714 *to* 1720*—His system of Life and Amusements—Engages in Irish Politics—His Proposal for Encouragement of Irish Manufactures—and other Tracts—Drapier's Letters—Swift's subsequent popularity.*

AT the period of Swift's residence in England, he was possessed, in an eminent degree, of many of the qualities which are the surest passports to female favour. He was not only a man of the highest talents, but he enjoyed, in full extent, all the public notice and distinction which the reputation of such talents can confer. He moved in the highest circles, was concerned in the most important business of the time, and had all the advantage of a name blown wide abroad in the world. In private society, the varied richness of his conversation, the extent of his knowledge, his unequalled powers of wit and humour, even the somewhat cynical eccentricities of his temper, joined to form a character equally interesting from its merit and originality. His manners, in these his better days, were but slightly tinged with the peculiarities which afterwards marked them more unpleasantly, and his ease and address were such as became the companion of statesmen and courtiers:

> He moved, and bow'd, and talked with too much grace,
> Nor show'd the parson in his gait or face.

Thus accomplished, Swift was readily admitted to the intimate society of many of the most beautiful and accomplished women of the age. His correspondence with the unfortunate Mrs. Long, shows how well he knew to support the character of a favourite of the fair. The friendship of Lady Betty Germain, of Mrs. Barton, of the Countess of Winchelsea, the Duchess of Ormond, Lady Masham, and many other ladies eminent for beauty or accomplishments, rank or fashion, evinces how high he stood in the estimation of those by whom it is almost every man's ambition to be distinguished. But these enviable talents of pleasing became, through an unfortunate contingence, the means of embittering, if not of abridging, the life of the possessor.

Amongst the families in London where Swift was chiefly domesticated, was that of Mrs. Vanhomrigh, a widow lady of fortune and respectability, who had two sons and two daughters.* The eldest

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* She was the daughter of Mr. Stone the commissioner, and widow of Bartholomew Vanhomrigh, a Dutch merchant, who had been commissary of stores for King William during the Irish civil wars, and afterwards muster-master-general, and commissioner of the revenue. Notwithstanding his having enjoyed a large income

daughter was Esther Vanhomrigh, better known by the poetical appellation of Vanessa. On her personal charms we are left in some uncertainty, since Cadenus has said little upon that topic, and by other authorities, they have been rather depreciated.* But, when Swift became intimate in the family, she was not yet twenty years old, lively and graceful, yet with a greater inclination for reading and mental cultivation than is usually combined with a gay temper. This last attribute had fatal attractions for Swift, who, in intercourse with his female friends, had a marked pleasure in directing their studies, and acting as their literary Mentor; a dangerous character for him who assumes it, when genius, docility, and gratitude, are combined in a young and interesting pupil. From several passages in the Journal Swift's constant and intimate familiarity in the Vanhomrigh family is manifest; and it is plain also, he soon felt that his acquaintance with Miss Esther was such as must necessarily give pain to Stella. While Vanessa was occupying much of his time, and much doubtless of his thoughts, she is never once mentioned in the Journal directly by name, and is only twice casually indicated by the title of Vanhomrigh's eldest daughter. There was, therefore, a consciousness on Swift's part, that his attachment to his younger pupil was of a nature which could not be gratifying to her predecessor, although he probably shut his own eyes to the consequences of an intimacy which he wished to conceal from those of Stella. Miss Vanhomrigh, in the meanwhile, sensible of the pleasure which Swift received from her society, and of the advantages of youth and fortune which she possessed, and ignorant of the peculiar circumstances in which he stood with respect to another, naturally, and surely without offence either to reason or virtue, gave way to the hope of forming a union with a man, whose talents had first attracted her admiration, and whose attentions, in the course of their mutual studies, had, by degrees, gained her affections, and seemed to warrant his own. It is easy for those who look back on this melancholy story, to blame the assiduity of Swift, or the imprudence of Vanessa. But the first deviation from the straight line of moral rectitude is, in such a case, so very gradual, and, on the female side, the shades of colour which part esteem from affection, and affection from passion, are so imperceptibly heightened, that they who fail to stop at the exact point where wisdom bids, have much indulgence to claim from all who share with them the frailties of mortality. The imprudent friends continued to use the language of

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and purchased forfeited estates to the value of 12,000*l.* in Ireland, he did not leave above 16,000*l.* to be divided amongst his children at his death. His widow and family settled in London about 1709, and had a house in Bury-street, St. James's. Their vicinity to Swift's lodgings, and connexion with Ireland, probably first led to the intimacy which afterwards proved so fatal.

* Lord Orrery says Vanessa was not handsome: but it is certain he only spoke of her by report. Mr. Berwick has a picture of one of the Miss Vanhomrighs, but whether of Vanessa or her sister is, I believe doubted.

friendship, but with the assiduity and earnestness of a warmer passion, until Vanessa rent asunder the veil, by intimating to Swift the state of her affections; and in this, as she conceived, she was justified by his own favourite, though dangerous maxim, of doing that which seems in itself right, without respect to the common opinion of the world. We cannot doubt that he actually felt the "shame, disappointment, guilt, surprise," expressed in his celebrated poem, though he had not courage to take the open and manly course, of avowing those engagements with Stella, or other impediments, which prevented him from accepting the hand and fortune of her rival. Perhaps he was conscious that such an explanation had been too long delayed, to be now stated without affording grounds for the heavy charge of having flattered Miss Vanhomrigh into hopes, which, from the nature of his own situation, could never be gratified. This remorseful consciousness, too, he might feel when looking back on his conduct, though until then he had blindly consulted his own gratification in seeking the pleasure of Vanessa's society, without being aware of the difficulties in which they were both becoming gradually entangled. Without, therefore, making this painful but just confession, he answered the avowal of Vanessa's passion, at first in raillery, and afterwards by an offer of devoted and everlasting friendship, founded on the basis of virtuous esteem. Vanessa seems neither to have been contented nor silenced by the result of her declaration, but, to the very close of her life, persisted in endeavouring, by entreaties and arguments, to extort a more lively return to her passion, than this cold proffer was calculated to afford. It is difficult to ascertain when this eclaircissement took place, but it seems to have preceded Swift's departure for Ireland to take possession of his deanery, though it must certainly have been made after obtaining that preferment.* The effect of his increasing intimacy with the fascinating Vanessa, may be plainly traced in the Journal to Stella, which, in the course of its progress, becomes more and more cold and indifferent,—breathes fewer of those aspirations after the quiet felicity of a life devoted to M. D. and the willows at Laracor, uses less frequently the affectionate jargon, called the "little language," in which his fondness at first displays itself,—and, in short, exhibits all the symptoms of waning affection. Stella was neither blind to the altered style of his correspondence, nor deaf to the rumours which were wafted to Ireland. Her letters are not preserved, but, from several passages of the Journal, it appears, that they intimated displeasure and jealousy, which Swift endeavours to appease. But there are two passages, in particular, worthy of notice, as illustrative of the history of Stella and Vanessa. The first occurs when Swift obtains the Deanery of St. Patrick's. "If it be worth 400*l.* a year," he says, "overplus shall be divided . . . . besides usual . . ." an imperfect phrase, which, however, implies, that his relation with Stella

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* The name Cadenus is an anagram of Decanus.

was to continue on its former footing, and that she was only to share the advantage of his promotion, by an increase of her separate income. This hint was probably designed to bar any expectations of a proposal of marriage. Another ominous sentence in the Journal is the following intimation: "His (Mr. Vanhomrigh's) eldest daughter is come of age, and going to Ireland to look after her fortune, and get it into her own hands." This plan, which Miss Vanhomrigh afterwards accomplished, boded no good to the unfortunate Stella.

Upon Swift's return to Ireland, we may guess at the disturbed state of his feelings, wounded at once by ungratified ambition, and harassed by his affection being divided between two objects, each worthy of his attachment, and each having great claims upon him, while neither was likely to remain contented with the limited return of friendship in exchange for love, and that friendship, too, divided with a rival. The claims of Stella were preferable in point of date, and, to a man of honour and good faith, in every respect irresistible. She had resigned her country, her friends, and even hazarded her character, in hopes of one day being united to Swift. But, if Stella had made the greater sacrifice, Vanessa was the more important victim. She had youth, fortune, fashion; all the acquired accomplishments and information in which Stella was deficient; possessed at least as much wit, and certainly higher powers of imagination. She had, besides, enjoyed the advantage of having in a manner compelled Swift to hear and reply to the language of passion. There was, in her case, no Mrs. Dingley, no convenient third party, whose presence in society and community in correspondence, necessarily imposed upon both a restraint, convenient perhaps to Swift, but highly unfavourable to Stella. Vanessa could address Swift directly in her own name, and as he was obliged to reply in the same manner, there is something in the eloquence of affection that must always extort a corresponding answer. There is little doubt, therefore, that Swift, at this time, gave Vanessa a preference in his affection, although, for a reason hereafter to be hinted, it is probable, that the death or removal of one of these far-famed rivals would not have accelerated his union with the other. At least we are certain, that, could the rivals have laid jealousy and desire to sleep, the lover's choice would have been to have bounded his connexion with both within the limits of Platonic affection. That he had no intention to marry Vanessa, is evident from passages in his letters, which are inconsistent with such an arrangement, as, on the other hand, their whole tenor excludes that of a guilty intimacy. Before leaving England, he acquainted her with his determination to forget everything there, and to write as seldom as he could; and in the same letter he expresses his doubts of ever visiting England again,—doubts which implied a gross insult, had he at any time held out a prospect of their union, but something still more villainous, if we suppose the parties to have passed the limits of innocence. On the other hand, his conduct, with respect to Stella, was equally dubious. So soon as he was settled in the deanery-house, his first care was to secure lodgings for

Mrs. Dingley and Stella, upon Ormond's Quay, on the other side of the Liffey; and to resume, with the same guarded caution, the intercourse which had formerly existed between them. But circumstances soon compelled him to give that connexion a more definite character.

Mrs. Vanhomrigh was now dead. Her two sons survived her but a short time, and the circumstances of the young ladies were so far embarrassed by inconsiderate expenses, as gave them a handsome excuse for retiring to Ireland, where their father had left a small property near Celbridge. The arrival of Vanessa in Dublin excited the apprehensions of Swift, and the jealousy of Stella. However imprudently the Dean might have indulged himself and the unfortunate young lady, by frequenting her society too frequently during his residence in England, there is no doubt that he was alive to all the hazards that might accrue to the reputation and peace of both, by continuing the same intimacy in Dublin. But the means of avoiding it were no longer in his power, although his reiterated remonstrances assumed even the character of unkindness.* She importuned him with complaints of neglect and cruelty, and it was obvious, that any decisive measure to break their correspondence would be attended with some such tragic consequence, as, though late, at length concluded their story. Thus engaged in a labyrinth, where perseverance was wrong, and retreat seemed almost impossible, Swift resolved to temporize, in hopes, probably, that time, accident, or the mutability incident to violent affections, might extricate himself and Vanessa from the snare in which his own culpable imprudence had involved them. Meanwhile, he continued to bestow on her those marks of regard which it was impossible to refuse to her feelings towards him, even if they had not been reciprocal. But the conduct which he adopted as kindest to Miss Vanhomrigh, was likely to prove fatal to Stella. His fears and affections were next awakened for that early favourite, whose

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* The effect which such severity produced upon a character of Miss Vanhomrigh's ardent cast, will be best illustrated from her own words, in a letter to Swift, dated 1714. "You bid me be easy, and you would see me as often as you could. You had better have said, as often as you could get the better of your inclinations so much; or as often as you remember there was such a one in the world. If you continue to treat me as you do, you will not be made uneasy by me long. It is impossible to describe what I have suffered since I saw you last. I am sure I could have borne the rack much better than those killing, killing words of yours. Sometimes I have resolved to die without seeing you more; but those resolves, to your misfortune, did not last long. For there is something in human nature, that prompts one so to find relief in this world, I must give way to it: and beg you would see me, and speak kindly to me; for I am sure you'd not condemn any one to suffer what I have done, could you but know it. The reason I write to you, is, because I cannot tell it to you should I see you. For when I begin to complain, then you are angry; and there is something in your looks so awful, that it strikes me dumb. O! that you may have but so much regard for me left, that this complaint may touch your soul with pity! I say as little as ever I can; did you but know what I thought, I am sure it would move you to forgive me, and believe, I cannot help telling you this and live."

suppressed grief and jealousy, acting upon a frame naturally delicate, menaced her health in an alarming manner. The feelings with which Swift beheld the wreck which his conduct had occasioned, will not bear description. Mrs. Johnson had forsaken her country, and clouded even her reputation, to become the sharer of his fortunes, when at their lowest; and the implied ties by which he was bound to make her compensation, were as strong as the most solemn promise, if indeed even promises of future marriage had not been actually exchanged between them. He employed Dr. St. George Ashe, Bishop of Clogher, his tutor and early friend, to request the cause of her melancholy, and he received the answer which his conscience must have anticipated—it was her sensibility to his recent indifference, and to the discredit which her own character had sustained from the long subsistence of the dubious and mysterious connexion between them. To convince her of the constancy of his affection, and to remove her beyond the reach of calumny, there was but one remedy. To this communication Swift replied, that he had formed two resolutions concerning matrimony:—one, that he would not marry till possessed of a competent fortune; the other, that the event should take place at a time of life which gave him a reasonable prospect to see his children settled in the world. The independence proposed, he said, he had not yet achieved, being still embarrassed by debt: and, on the other hand, he was past that term of life after which he had determined never to marry. Yet he was ready to go through the ceremony for the ease of Mrs. Johnson's mind, provided it should remain a strict secret from the public, and that they should continue to live separately, and in the same guarded manner as formerly. To these hard terms Stella subscribed; they relieved her own mind, at least, from all scruples on the impropriety of their connexion; and they soothed her jealousy, by rendering it impossible that Swift should ever give his hand to her rival. They were married in the garden of the deanery, by the Bishop of Clogher, in the year 1716.*

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* The Bishop of Clogher, it is said, informed Bishop Berkeley of this secret, and by Berkeley's relict it was communicated to Mr. Monck Berkeley. See the Inquiry into the life of Swift in his "Literary Reliques," p. 36. But I must add, that if, as affirmed by Mr. Monck Mason, Berkeley was in Italy from the period of the marriage to the death of the Bishop of Clogher, this communication could not have taken place. Dr. Madden told the same story to Dr. Johnson, upon the authority of Dr. Sheridan, to whom Stella unfolded the secret shortly before her death. And neither Mrs. Whiteway, nor any of Swift's intimate friends, excepting Dr. Lyon, doubted the fact of this unhappy marriage. Mrs. Sican's authority may also be added to the list of witnesses.

Since the first edition of this work appeared, some curious and elaborate notices concerning Swift's life have appeared in the "History of the Cathedral of St. Patrick's, Dublin," by William Monck Mason, Esq., who expresses his total disbelief of the prevailing report of a private marriage between Mrs. Esther Johnson and the Dean, with many strictures on the credulity of those previous biographers of Swift, by whom it had been received as probable. It must be conceded to both parties, in such a controversy, that it respects a doubtful and dark

Immediately subsequent to the ceremony, Swift's state of mind appears to have been dreadful. Delany, (as I have learned from a friend of his relict,) being pressed to give his opinion on this strange union, said, that about the time it took place, he observed Swift to be extremely gloomy and agitated, so much so, that he went to Arch-

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transaction, entered into by two persons, whose exact situation and feelings, with respect to each other, could only be known with precise accuracy to themselves. It was also a transaction in which the Dean is said to have exacted the closest secrecy; and that all which is known with respect to it, has rather transpired by the various channels intimated above, than become the subject of direct and positive evidence. It is therefore not wonderful, that the degree of testimony which establishes in the mind of one person a strong probability, may be of little weight in the opinion of another. Still, however, a report so distinctly traced to Sheridan, Delany, and Mrs. Whiteway, Swift's nearest intimates and friends, will have great weight with persons who consider the question without prepossession. The opinion expressed by Dr. Lyon is, however, certainly entitled to insertion, although the present editor is still of opinion, that it is almost entirely founded upon an argument *ex absurdo*, which might have been very applicable to any other individual, but does not apply to so singular a person as Swift, and whom circumstances had placed in a very uncommon situation with respect to Stella on the one hand, and Vanessa on the other. An argument which sets out by obliging us to believe nothing with respect to Swift irreconcilable with the "common rules" from which he claimed emancipation for "nobler minds," would either prove that Vanessa and Stella had never existed, or that Swift had never placed himself, with respect to these ladies, in the painful predicament which seems to have broken the heart of both, and to have gone far to breaking his own. Mr. Monck Mason's opinion is thus stated.

"Notwithstanding Dr. Delany's sentiments of Swift's marriage, and notwithstanding all that Lord Orrery and others have said about it, there is no authority for it but a hearsay story, and that very ill-founded. It is certain that the Dean told one of his friends, whom he advised to marry, that he himself never wished to marry at the time he ought to have entered into that state; for he counted upon it as the happiest condition, especially towards the decline of life, when a faithful, tender friend, is most wanted. While he was talking to this effect, his friend expressed his wishes to have seen him married: the Dean asked why? 'Because,' replied the other, 'I should have had the pleasure of seeing your offspring; all the world would have been pleased to have seen the issue of such a genius.' The Dean smiled, and denied his being married, in the same manner as before, and said he never saw the woman he wished to be married to. The same gentleman, who was intimate with Mrs. Dingley for ten years before she died, in 1743, took occasion to tell her that such a story was whispered of her friend Mrs. Johnson's marriage with the Dean, but she only laughed at it as an idle tale, founded only on suspicion. Again, Mrs. Brent, with whom the Dean's mother used to lodge in Dublin, in the queen's time, and who was his own housekeeper after he settled in Dublin in 1714, and who, for her many good qualities in that situation, was much confided in, never did believe there was a marriage between those persons, notwithstanding all that love and fondness that subsisted between them: she thought it was all platonic love, and she often told her daughter Ridgeway so, who succeeded her in the same office of housekeeper. She said that Mrs. Johnson never came alone to the deanery, that Mrs. Dingley and she came always together, and that she never slept in that house if the Dean was there, only in time of his sickness, to attend him, and see him well taken care of; and during this course of her generous attendance, Mrs. Dingley and she slept together, and, as soon as he recovered, they returned to their lodgings on Ormond-quay. These ladies slept,

bishop King, to mention his apprehensions. On entering the library, Swift rushed out with a countenance of distraction, and passed him without speaking. He found the Archbishop in tears, and upon asking the reason, he said, "You have just met the most unhappy man on earth; but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question."*

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two other times, at the deanery, at an * * * * pleasant house, and near his garden called Naboth's vineyard, and that was for those months in 1726 and 1727 which he spent in England. It chanced that she was taken ill at the deanery, and it added much to his affliction that it happened at the deanery, for fear of defamation in case of her dying in his house, whether he was at home or abroad. Had he been married, he could not have lived in a state of separation from her, he loved her so passionately; for he admired her upon every account that can make a woman amiable or valuable as a companion for life. Is it possible to think that an affectionate husband could first have written, and then have used, those several prayers, by a dying wife with whom he never cohabited, and whose mouth must have been filled with reproaches for denying her all conjugal rites for a number of years, nay, from the very period (1716) that is pretended to be the time of the marriage? Would he have suffered his wife to make a will, signed Esther Johnson, and to demise 1500*l.* away from him, of which 1000*l.* is enjoyed by the chaplain of Steevens's hospital for the sick, and accept of a gold watch only, as a testimony of her regard for him?—If he could direct, or rather command her, to leave her fortune as he pleased, it is probable he would have directed the application towards the future support of lunatics, which was the species of charity he thought most worthy the attention of the public. Is it not probable that two gentlemen of honour and fortune, still living, who knew them both intimately, and who were her executors, would have known of a marriage, if there was one? And yet they always did, and do positively declare, they never had cause to suspect they were married, although they were in company with both one thousand times; they saw proof of the warmest friendship, and any love but connubial love. If she made him a present of a book, you may read in the title-page these words—and so he distinguished every book she gave him:

Esther Johnson's gift to
Jonathan Swift—1719.

Would he deny his marriage with a woman of good fortune at that time, when he says 'she had a gracefulness somewhat more than human, in every motion, word, and action'?"

The reader must judge of the force of this reasoning, compared with the circumstances brought together in the text, and form the best opinion which he can upon an event which, take it either way, is enveloped in mystery and inconsistency.

* It is proper to state, that Delany's inference from this circumstance, was a suspicion that Swift, after his union with Stella, had discovered that there was too near a consanguinity between them, to admit of their living together, and that he had then been stating the circumstance to the Archbishop. But it does not appear that the words used by the prelate necessarily indicated a connexion of this kind, and there are positive proofs that none such could possibly exist. The connexion was supposed to depend upon Sir William Temple, of whom the legend pronounced both Swift and Stella to be illegitimate children. It is needless to dwell upon the improbability that such a relationship should have been a secret to both parties, during their intimacy of so many years, and yet should all at once have become known to them upon their marriage in Ireland, when their parents were dead, and when they were at a distance from all persons who could be supposed the confidants of Sir William Temple's intrigues. It is enough

Swift secluded himself from society for some days. When he reappeared, his intercourse with Stella and Mrs. Dingley was resumed, with the same guarded and cautious attention, to prevent the slightest suspicion of a more intimate union with the former, as if such intimacy had not now been legal and virtuous. Stella, therefore, continued the beloved and intimate friend of Swift; the regulator of his household and table on public days, although she only appeared there as an ordinary guest; the companion of his social hours, and his comforter in sickness;—but his wife only in name, and even that nominal union a secret from the world. Thus situated, Stella continued to experience, in some degree, the inconveniences attached to a situation so doubtful; for though she was known to several ladies, yet their intercourse was rather formal than friendly, and her intimacies lay entirely with Swift's male friends. The obliging friend of Mrs. Delany, whom I have already mentioned, says, that Stella "went with Mrs. Dingley to Dr. Delany's villa on Wednesdays, when his men-companions dined, before he was married to my friend. She (Mrs. Delany) once saw her by accident, and was struck with the beauty of her countenance, and particularly with her fine dark eyes. She was very pale, and looked pensive, but not melancholy, and had hair black as a raven." This slight sketch of Stella, from the recollection of the venerable Mrs. Delany, will probably interest the reader as much as the Editor.*

If flattery and fame could have made up for domestic happiness, Stella might have been satisfied. Every year, on her birth-day, the Dean addressed her in a copy of verses, in which the most elegant compliments were bestowed with an affectation of bluntness, which seemed only to warrant for their sincerity. But they contain frequent insinuations of angry passions, and virtues which

> Suspended wait,
> Till time has open'd reason's gate.

Hints which too plainly imply, that their unsatisfactory state of union neither lulled jealousy nor resentment to silence. These complaints of

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to say, that Swift's parents resided in Ireland from before 1665, until his birth, in 1667, and that Temple was residing as ambassador in Holland, from April, 1666, until January, 1668. As for Stella, her mother being introduced into Sir William Temple's family, after her husband's death, by the compassionate friendship of Lady Gifford, there is every reason to suppose, that she was never even seen by Temple, until the future wife of Swift was two or three years old. We must, therefore, seek some other reasons for Swift's distress, and the expressions of King, than the construction assigned to them by Delany.

* The only portrait of Stella known to exist, is in possession of my kind and respected friend, the Rev. Mr. Berwick. Dr. Tuke, of St. Stephen's Green has a lock of her hair, on the envelope of which is written, in Dean Swift's hand—"only a woman's hair."—If Stella was dead, as is most probable, when Swift laid apart this memorial, the motto is an additional instance of his striving to veil the most bitter feelings under the guise of cynical indifference.

Stella's temper occur most frequently in the poems which precede the death of Vanessa, and the reason is sufficiently apparent. Under the impression of such feelings, she is said to have composed the following lines :*

ON JEALOUSY.

"Oh shield me from his rage, celestial Powers!
This tyrant that embitters all my hours.
Ah Love ! you've poorly play'd the hero's part;
You conquer'd, but you can't defend my heart.
When first I bent beneath your gentle reign,
I thought this monster banish'd from your train:
But you would raise him to support your throne,
And now he claims your empire as his own;
Or tell me, tyrants, have you both agreed
That where one reigns, the other shall succeed?"

The mind pauses on this mysterious story, with an anxious wish to ascertain its secret causes : and though time and death have destroyed the perfect clue to the labyrinth, a few speculations may be hazarded from the facts, so far as they are ascertained. The reasons alleged by Swift himself for the extraordinary conditions which he attached to his marriage, seem merely ostensible; at least they are such as never influenced any reasonable being in the same situation; for they resolve into a desire to conceal from the world his having had the weakness to break two private resolutions concerning matrimony, of which resolutions the world could know nothing. Terror for the effects the news of his marriage might produce on the irritable feelings of Vanessa, and a consciousness that his long concealment of the circumstances which led to it, placed his conduct towards her in a culpable point of view, must be allowed as one chief motive for the secrecy enjoined upon Stella. This dread would be increased to anguish, if we suppose that he married Mrs. Johnson to satisfy his own honour, and her conscience, while his heart was secretly devoted to her rival. But had such been the only cause of his distress of mind, and of the injunctions of secrecy laid upon Stella, that secrecy would have ceased to be necessary, after Vanessa was no more. A struggle there might have been between his pride and his affection; but it seems reasonable to suppose that the latter would have been victor, where the former had so little to support it. There remains a conjecture which can only be intimated, but which, if correct, will explain much of Swift's peculiar conduct in his intercourse with the female sex. During that period of life when the passions are most violent, Swift boasts of his "cold temper." Since that time, the continual recurrence of a distressing vertigo was gradually undermining his health. It seems, in these circumstances, probable, that the con-

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* I say *said* to have composed, because there is room to suppose Stella received assistance (from Delany probably) both in these, and the much more beautiful verses addressed to Swift on his birthday.

tinence which he observed, may have been owing to physical, as well as moral causes. Were such the case, he might seek the society of Vanessa, without the apprehension of exciting passions, to which he was himself insensible; and his separation from Stella, after marriage, might be a matter equally of choice, or of necessity. This much, at least, is certain, that if, according to a saying which Swift highly approved, desire produces love in man, we cannot find any one line in Swift's writings or correspondence, intimating his having felt such a source of passion; nor indeed is there a single anecdote of his life recorded, which indicates his having submitted to what he irreverently terms "that ridiculous passion which has no being but in play-books or romances." In his youth he sought female society merely as a relaxation from unpleasant thoughts, and from Stella and Vanessa he seems, at a later period, to have required no other proof of affection than the pleasures of intimate friendship, enlivened by female wit, and softened by female sensibility. The qualities for which he extols both his celebrated favourites are uniformly mental, and not only so, but such as are rather of a masculine character, as courage, frankness, constancy, and sincerity; rather than delicacy, sensibility, and ardour of affection. In short, he praises in his female friends those attributes chiefly which are most frequently met with in the other sex, and appears embarrassed, rather than gratified, by the superior ardour of passion with which his temperate predilection was returned. He has himself characterized his affection for Vanessa as void of passion:

"His conduct might have made him styled
A father, and the nymph his child.
That innocent delight he took
To see the virgin mind her book,
Was but the master's secret joy
In school to hear the finest boy."

And Stella he has thus addressed:

"Thou, Stella, wert no longer young,
When first for thee my harp I strung;
Without one word of Cupid's darts,
Of killing eyes, or bleeding hearts:
With friendship and esteem possest,
I ne'er admitted love a guest."

If such were the goal of his expectations and hopes, he may have considered his regard for Vanessa as no breach of his faith to Stella, until taught by the unrestrained declaration of the former, as well as by their mutual rivalry, that the coldness of his own temper had prevented him from estimating the force of passion in those who became his victims.

After his marriage with Stella, Swift seems to have redoubled his anxiety to moderate the passion of Vanessa into friendship, or to give it, if possible, a new direction. The secret husband of another, he

could not but be conscious how ill it became him to remain the object of such ardent affection. He introduced to her notice Dean Winter, a gentleman of character and fortune, as a candidate for her hand; but she rejected the proposal in the most peremptory manner. She was also unsuccessfully addressed by Dr. Price, afterwards archbishop of Cashell. At length, about the year 1717, she retired from Dublin to her house and property near Celbridge, to nurse her hopeless passion in seclusion from the world. Swift seems to have foreseen and warned her against the consequences of this step. His letters uniformly exhort her to seek general society, to take exercise, and to divert, as much as possible, the current of her thoughts from the unfortunate subject which was preying upon her spirits. He even exhorts her to leave Ireland. But these admonitions are mingled with expressions of tenderness, greatly too warm not to come from the heart, and too strong to be designed merely to soothe the unfortunate recluse. Until the year 1720, he never appears to have visited her at Celbridge; they only met when she was occasionally in Dublin. But in that year, and down to the time of her death, Swift came repeatedly to Celbridge: and, from the information of a most obliging correspondent, I am enabled to give an account of some minute particulars attending them.

Marley Abbey, near Celbridge, where Miss Vanhomrigh resided, is built much in the form of a real cloister, especially in its external appearance. An aged man (upwards of ninety by his own account) showed the grounds to my correspondent. He was the son of Mrs. Vanhomrigh's gardener, and used to work with his father in the garden when a boy. He remembered the unfortunate Vanessa well, and his account of her corresponded with the usual description of her person, especially as to her *embonpoint*. He said she went seldom abroad, and saw little company: her constant amusement was reading, or walking in the garden. Yet, according to this authority, her society was courted by several families in the neighbourhood, who visited her, notwithstanding her seldom returning that attention; and he added, that her manners interested every one who knew her. But she avoided company, and was always melancholy, save when Dean Swift was there, and then she seemed happy. The garden was to an uncommon degree crowded with laurels. The old man said, that when Miss Vanhomrigh expected the Dean, she always planted, with her own hand, a laurel or two against his arrival. He showed her favourite seat, still called Vanessa's Bower. Three or four trees, and some laurels, indicate the spot. They had formerly, according to the old man's information, been trained into a close arbour. There were two seats and a rude table within the bower, the opening of which commanded a view of the Liffey, which had a romantic effect, and there was a small cascade that murmured at some distance. In this sequestered spot, according to the old gardener's account, the Dean and Vanessa used often to sit, with books and writing materials on the table before them. And the verses composed among such objects,

by that unfortunate lady, will perhaps help us to guess at the subject of their classical interviews.

AN ODE TO SPRING.

HAIL, blushing goddess, beauteous Spring,
Who in thy jocund train dost bring
Loves and Graces, smiling hours,
Balmy breezes, fragrant flowers,
Come, with tints of roseate hue,
Nature's faded charms renew.
Yet why should I thy presence hail?
To me no more the breathing gale
Comes fraught with sweets, no more the rose
With such transcendent beauty blows,
As when Cadenus blest the scene,
And shared with me those joys serene.
When, unperceived, the lambent fire
Of Friendship kindled new desire;
Still listening to his tuneful tongue,
The truths which angels might have sung,
Divine imprest their gentle sway,
And sweetly stole my soul away.
My guide, instructor, lover, friend,
(Dear names!) in one idea blend;
O! still conjoin'd, your incense rise,
And waf sweet odours to the skies.

AN ODE TO WISDOM.

O PALLAS! I invoke thy aid!
Vouchsafe to hear a wretched maid,
By tender love deprest;
'Tis just that thou should'st heal the smart
Inflicted by thy subtle art,
And calm my troubled breast.

No random shot from Cupid's bow,
But by thy guidance, soft and slow,
It sunk within my heart;
Thus, Love being armed with Wisdom's force,
In vain I try to stop its course,
In vain repel the dart.

O Goddess! break the fatal league,
Let Love, with Folly and Intrigue,
More fit associates find!
And thou alone, within my breast,
O! deign to soothe my griefs to rest,
And heal my tortured mind.

Vanessa, besides musing over her unhappy attachment, had, during her residence in this solitude, the care of nursing the declining health of her younger sister, who at length died about 1720. This event, as it left her alone in the world, seems to have increased the energy of her fatal passion for Swift, while he, on the contrary, saw room for still greater reserve, when her situation became that of a solitary female, without the society or countenance of a female relation. But

Miss Vanhomrigh, irritated at the situation in which she found herself, determined on bringing to a crisis those expectations of an union with the object of her affections, to the hope of which she had clung amid every vicissitude of his conduct towards her. The most probable bar was his undefined connexion with Mrs. Johnson, which, as it must have been perfectly known to her, had, doubtless, long excited her secret jealousy: although only a single hint to that purpose is to be found in their correspondence, and that so early as 1713, when she writes to him, then in Ireland, "If you are very happy, it is ill-natured of you not to tell me so, *except 'tis what is inconsistent with mine.*" Her silence and patience under this state of uncertainty, for no less than eight years, must have been partly owing to her awe for Swift, and partly perhaps to the weak state of her rival's health, which, from year to year, seemed to announce speedy dissolution. At length, however, Vanessa's impatience prevailed, and she ventured on the decisive step of writing to Mrs. Johnson herself, requesting to know the nature of that connexion. Stella, in reply, informed her of her marriage with the Dean; and, full of the highest resentment against Swift for having given another female such a right in him as Miss Vanhomrigh's inquiries implied, she sent to him her rival's letter of interrogation, and, without seeing him, or awaiting his reply, retired to the house of Mr. Ford, near Dublin. Every reader knows the consequence. Swift, in one of those paroxysms of fury to which he was liable, both from temper and disease, rode instantly to Marley Abbey. As he entered the apartment, the sternness of his countenance, which was peculiarly formed to express the fiercer passions, struck the unfortunate Vanessa with such terror, that she could scarce ask whether he would not sit down. He answered by flinging a letter on the table, and instantly leaving the house, mounted his horse and returned to Dublin. When Vanessa opened the packet, she only found her own letter to Stella. It was her death warrant. She sunk at once under the disappointment of the delayed, yet cherished hopes, which had so long sickened her heart, and beneath the unrestrained wrath of him for whose sake she had indulged them. How long she survived this last interview is uncertain, but the time does not seem to have exceeded a few weeks. In the meanwhile, she revoked a will made in favour of Swift, and settled her fortune, which was considerable, upon Mr. Marshal, afterwards one of the judges of the Court of Common Pleas in Ireland, and Dr. Berkeley, the celebrated philosopher, afterwards Bishop of Cloyne.* A remarkable condition is said to have accompanied her bequest: that her executors, namely, should make public all the letters which had passed between the testator and Swift, as well as the celebrated poem of Cadenus and Vanessa. It is said that Berkeley, from friendship to Swift, and Marshal, influenced

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* Dr. Berkeley had been known to the Vanhomrigh family in London, by the introduction of Swift, but had not seen Miss Esther Vanhomrigh since she came to Ireland. Her succession amounted to about eight thousand pounds.

by Berkeley's opinion, or perhaps dreading to bring on himself the displeasure of the celebrated satirist, resolved to disobey this injunction; and every biographer of Swift has hitherto recorded either the apology or censure of Vanessa's executors. But the truth is, that Miss Vanhomrigh's will contains no such injunction, so that if it at all existed, it must have been delivered in a manner and at a time when Berkeley, honourable and virtuous as he was, felt himself entitled to dispense with obeying it. He probably thought, that giving publicity to the romantic expressions of Vanessa's passion, could only gratify idle or malignant curiosity, exasperate the sufferings of Swift, which were already beyond endurance, and perhaps expose to evil construction the reputation of his benefactress. Such might be the reasoning of Berkeley, supposing that Vanessa really enjoined this extraordinary posthumous revenge. But as the report, however uniform, is certainly inaccurate in ascribing a place to such a condition in Vanessa's will, it may be well doubted whether it is better founded in the general point of its existence.

Bishop Berkeley is said to have destroyed the original letters of this celebrated correspondence. But a full copy remained in possession of Judge Marshal, and, after his death, some mutilated extracts found their way to the public. By the friendship of Mr. Berwick, the editor is enabled to fill up this curious desideratum in Swift's correspondence,* which gives him the more pleasure, as any sinister interpretation of the former imperfect extracts, which, as was natural, were taken from those passages that expressed most warmth of passion, will be in a great measure confuted by the entire publication. The tone of feeling is lowered by the context, and those passages, which, taken by themselves, might appear suspicious, especially while what was suppressed was left to imagination, are much modified, when restored to their place among grave maxims of advice, and trifling passages of humour. At any rate, all from which any inference, favourable or unfavourable, can be deduced, is now at length before the public. There are no fragments produced, from which suspicions may be excited, and no blanks remain to be filled up by the suggestions of detraction. If the correspondence proves less interesting than the reader might have expected, the admirers of Swift will be gratified with the confutation which the letters afford of the evil reports first propagated by Lord Orrery.

The sum of the evidence which they afford seems to amount to this,—that while residing in England for years, and at a distance from Stella, Swift incautiously engaged in a correspondence with Miss Vanhomrigh, which probably at first meant little more than mere gallantry, since the mother, brother, and sister, seem all to have been confidants of their intimacy. After his journey to Ireland, his letters assume a graver cast, and consist rather of advice, caution,

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* In "Swift's Works," edited by Scott, to which this Memoir was prefixed. [Edit.]

and rebuke, than expressions of tenderness. Yet neither his own heart, nor the nature of Vanessa's violent attachment, permit him to suppress strong, though occasional and rare indications of the high regard in which he held her, although honour, friendship, and esteem, had united his fate with that of another. It would perhaps have been better, had their amours never become public; as that has, however, happened, it is the biographer's duty to throw such light upon them, as Mr. Berwick's friendship has enabled him to do; in order that Swift's conduct, weak and blameable as it must be held in this instance, may at least not suffer hereafter, from being seen under false or imperfect lights.

Although the letters were suppressed, Cadenus and Vanessa was given to the world soon after Miss Vanhomrigh's death. In this extraordinary poem, it seems to have been the intention of the author to soothe the passion which the unfortunate Miss Vanhomrigh was unable to subdue. One passage in it has given rise to inferences yet more fatal to Swift's character than can be deduced from the preceding narrative, or the persual of the correspondence between the lovers. It begins with the well-known lines,—

> But what success Vanessa met,
> Is to the world a secret yet, &c.

To what purpose these lines were introduced, whether from Swift's usual vein of humour, which never could resist a jest, or whether they were meant jocularly to intimate the danger attending the intimacy between Cadenus and Vanessa, it were in vain to inquire. But to brand Swift as a seducer, and Miss Vanhomrigh as his victim, on account of a single passage, not only detached, but, if interpreted in so sinister a manner, at variance with all the rest of the poem, requires the cold-blooded ingenuity of Lord Orrery. Every other line of the poem ascribes to Vanessa a passion, which had virtue for its foundation and object; and a similar picture is exhibited in the following lines, addressed by Swift to Vanessa, long after the date of his celebrated poem:—

> Nymph, would you learn the only art
> To keep a worthy lover's heart:
> First, to adorn your person well,
> In utmost cleanliness excel:
> And though you must the fashions take,
> Observe them but for fashion's sake;
> The strongest reason will submit
> To virtue, honour, sense, and wit:
> To such a nymph, the wise and good
> Cannot be faithless, if they would;
> For vices all have different ends,
> But virtue still to virtue tends:
> And when your lover is not true,
> 'Tis virtue fails in him, or you.
> And either he deserves disdain,
> Or you without a cause complain.

But here Vanessa cannot err,
Nor are these rules applied to her,
For who could such a nymph forsake,
Except a blockhead or a rake?
Or how could she her heart bestow,
Except where wit and virtue grow?

The letters of Miss Vanhomrigh preserve the same tone, and plead, in extenuation of her uncontrollable affection, the high moral character of its object. The reproaches, too, which they occasionally contain, are uniformly of coldness, not of desertion; nor do her expostulations, like those of a forsaken paramour, upbraid her lover with the wreck of her fame and virtue, in the tone of Virgil's deserted heroine:—

Te propter eundem,
Extinctus pudor et quâ solâ sidera adibam,
Fama prior.

On the contrary, Swift, under Vanessa's pen, remains a matchless model of virtue, just and perfect in everything, but in want of tenderness: the picture, in short, usually drawn by a male lover of his relentless mistress. It is the language of the most romantic attachment, but without the least tincture of criminal desire. Nay, in allusion, doubtless, to her rash declaration, she seems to take to herself, as the cause of their distress, those reproaches, which she was sensible she had no cause to impute to the perfidy of her lover. "Oh," she exclaims, "how have you forgot me! You endeavour by severities to force me from you, nor can I blame you; for with the utmost distress and confusion, I behold myself the cause of uneasy reflections to you. Yet I cannot comfort you, but here declare, that 'tis not in the power of time or accident, to lesson the inexpressible passion which I have for ———." This remarkable and decisive passage proves, that it was the unrequited passion of Vanessa, not the perfidy of Cadenus, which was the origin of their mutual misery; for she states Swift's unhappiness as arising from her love, and declares herself at the same time incapable of abating her affection. Enough of blame will remain with Swift, if we allow that he cherished with indecisive yet flattering hope, a passion which, in justice to himself and Vanessa, he ought, at whatever risk to her feelings and his own, to have repressed as soon as she declared it. The want of firmness which this conduct required, made every hour of indecision an act of real cruelty, though under the mask of mercy, and while it trained his victim towards the untimely grave which it prepared, ruined at the same time his own peace of mind.

Upon the death of Miss Vanhomrigh, Swift, in an agony of self-reproach and remorse, retreated into the south of Ireland, where he spent two months, without the place of his abode being known to any one. When he returned to Dublin, Stella was easily persuaded to forgive him, judging probably, that the anguish he had sustained was a sufficient expiation for an offence which was now irremediable. We turn with pleasure from this painful but necessary detail, to trace

Swift's occupation from the time of his settlement in Ireland, in 1714-15, till his first appearance as an Irish patriot, in 1723.

The business of the cathedral employed, doubtless, a considerable part of his leisure, embroiled as it was for some time by the resistance of his chapter, and the unfriendly interference of Archbishop King. But prejudices against the Dean wore off, as the rectitude of his intentions, and his disinterested zeal for the rights and welfare of the church, became more and more evident. He soon obtained such authority in his chapter that what he proposed was seldom disputed; after which, the business of leases and renewals, consulting old records, and compiling new ones, could not occupy any great portion of his time. There is every reason to believe, that, during these five or six years, Swift dedicated many hours to study. Herodotus, Philostratus, and Aulus Gellius, seem particularly to have engaged his attention, as he has written his opinion concerning each of them in the blank leaves of the volume. While such were his studies, we cannot suppose that the more pleasing paths of classical learning were neglected, even if we had not learned that the study of Lucretius was a favourite amusement during his residence at Gaulstown. But a list of books in his library, marked with his own manuscript remarks, affords the most authentic record of his taste in reading.

These studies, however, were unequal to occupy the spare time which Dublin gave to Swift after his constant labour in the politics of London. It has been generally thought, and with great probability, that the outline of "Gulliver's Travels" was drawn during this period. There are many circumstances which favour this opinion. The germ of this celebrated work is to be found in the travels of Martinus Scriblerus, which was sketched probably before danger and proscription had dispersed the literary club. The exasperated spirit with which the Dean viewed public affairs in Great Britain after the death of Queen Anne, coincides with many of the satirical touches of the "Travels." Besides, a letter from Vanessa contains an allusion to the adventure of Gulliver with the Ape in Brobdingnag, and from the same correspondence we learn, that Swift was, in 1722, engaged with the perusal of voyages and travels, studies congenial to the composition of the "Travels." He told Mrs. Whiteway, what he afterwards in substance told the world in person of the captain, that he had borrowed the sea terms in Gulliver from the old voyages, which he had fully perused. All which circumstances favour the opinion, that the Voyages of Gulliver were sketched during the period of which we treat, though, in the state in which they were published, they bear reference to politics of a later date.

Swift's lighter literary amusements were such as arose from his habits of society. These habits appear to have been very regular. He boarded himself for the sake of economy with Mr. Worrall, whose wife preserved that neatness and good order which was particularly agreeable to him. But he kept two public days at the Deanery

weekly. We can see, that, according to the manner of the times, and the practice of his predecessor, Dean Sterne, Swift's entertainments were accounted rather economical, although his guests, so far as conviviality was consistent with decorum, were welcomed with excellent wine. Swift, who used to declare he was never intoxicated in his life, had nevertheless lived intimately with those at whose tables wine was liberally consumed, and he was not himself averse to the moderate use of it.* In some respects, however, his mode of life ill-suited the poorer clergy, who expected more frequent hospitality at the Deanery, and their disappointment exposed Swift to some obloquy. His best defence is, that he received his preferment on such terms as involved him considerably in debt, and that his parsimony never interfered with the calls of justice, or of benevolence. During all his life, there was a struggle between the rigour of his habitual economy, and his sense of justice, which led sometimes to instances of very ridiculous accuracy, in adjusting his conduct, so as to compound matters between them. The story of his giving Pope and Gay, after a narrow calculation of what a supper would have cost him, half-a-crown apiece for the expense which they had spared him in coming after they had supped, is an excellent example.† Delany informs us, in like manner, that when Lady Eustace, or other women of rank, dined at the Deanery, Swift allowed them a shilling a-head to provide their own entertainment, and used to struggle hard that only sixpence should be allowed for the brat, as he called Miss Eustace, afterwards Mrs. Tickell. And when he dined with his poorer friends, he insisted upon paying his club as at a tavern, or house of public entertainment. The social party who assembled round him at the Deanery, were naturally led to exert themselves for his amusement, and the verses of Sheridan, Delany, and other literary friends, provoked his own replies, and lightened his more severe studies. In this contest of ingenuity, Sheridan seems to have been both witty himself, and the cause of wit in others. His simplicity and characteristic absence of mind were tempered with so much humour and readiness of repartee, that his company was invaluable to the Dean, and their friendship was never

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* Dr. King says Swift drank about a pint (English measure) of claret after dinner, which the Doctor, himself very abstemious, considered as too much.

† The anecdote is given by Spence, in the words of Pope. "Doctor Swift has an odd, blunt way, that is mistaken by strangers for ill nature—'Tis so odd that there is no describing it but by facts. I'll tell you one that first comes into my head. One evening Gay and I went to see him: you know how intimately we were all acquainted. On our coming in, 'Heyday, gentlemen, (says the Doctor,) what's the meaning of this visit! How came you to leave all the great lords that you are so fond of, to come hither to see a poor Dean?'—'Because we would rather see you than any of them.'—'Ay, any one that did not know so well as I do, might believe you. But since you are come, I must get some supper for you I suppose.'—'No, Doctor, we have supped already.'—'Supped already, that's im-

interrupted until the increasing irascibility and violence of Swift overcame the patience, and offended the honest pride of his respectful friend. Delany was a character of a very different description. He had risen from a low origin by the distinction due to his learning and genius. But prouder, more cautious, or more interested than Sheridan, he kept aloof from that horse-play of raillery which passed between the latter and the Dean, and which unavoidably lowers, in a certain degree, the man whose good humour is contented to submit to it. He made court to the Dean by verses less humorous, but more elegant than those of Sheridan, and he also had his answer in the style which he used. The distinction which the Dean made between them is obvious, from his exhorting Delany to impress on Sheridan the sense of propriety and self-respect in which he thought him deficient. Yet, though the guarded caution of Delany commanded more respect, the honest and precipitate good humour of Sheridan deserved better of Dean Swift, than that the former should have been exalted over him for an example. The high opinion expressed of Delany in the piece to which we refer, was afterwards in some respects qualified, as may be seen in the next chapter. Stella was active too in this poetical strife. It has been doubted whether she actually finished the verses to which her name is prefixed; but if she really wrote the last verse, in the epitaph on Demar the usurer, she wrote by far the best lines in the poem.

Gaulstown House, the seat of Lord Chief Baron Rochefort, where Swift sometimes resided for months at a time, gave variety to these exercitations. The Chief Baron, it would seem, was not very friendly to the existing government, so that epilogues, songs, and other vehicles of political satire, abounded at this mansion. Besides these, Swift indulged himself in an humorous poetical record of the occupations of the family and visitors, which gross and stupid malice afterwards construed into a lampoon. The author's vindication we reserve till we find him charged with a similar offence. But Dean Percival, whom he had rallied severely in the poem, was so much affected as to attempt a poetical reply, which, besides being very scarce, contains such a curious account of Swift's house-keeping and hospitality, though obvi-

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possible! why, it is not eight o'clock yet. That's very strange! but if you have not supped, I must have got something for you. Let me see, what should I have had? a couple of lobsters; ay, that would have done very well; two shillings—tarts a shilling: but you will drink a glass of wine with me, though you supped so much before your usual time only to spare my pocket.'—'No, we had rather talk with you than drink with you.'—'But if you had supped with me, as in all reason you ought to have done, you must then have drank with me. A bottle of wine, two shillings,—two and two is four, and one is five; just two and sixpence a-piece. There, Pope, there's half-a-crown for you, and there's another for you, sir; for I won't save anything by you, I am determined.'—This was all said and done with his usual seriousness on such occasions; and, in spite of everything we could say to the contrary, he actually obliged us to take the money."

ously viewed with a malignant eye, that it deserves being preserved in a note.*

The Dean's correspondence also occupied a good part of his leisure. It was chiefly confined to Tory friends, as his acquaintance was dropped by those of differing sentiments in party matters. With such conduct, it is pleasing to contrast the generosity of Addison, who took this period of adversity to renew that intimacy which had been broken off, while the Tories were triumphant. He intimated to Swift, through the Bishop of Derry, that it was his generous intention and earnest wish, that party should give way to friendship; and the Dean's answer to this overture, now first made public, was at the same time an elegant congratulation upon Addison's being made Secretary of State. "Three or four more such choices," he said, "would gain more hearts in three weeks, than the harsher measures of government in as many years." But the death of Addison broke off their renewed correspondence, after some kind letters had been exchanged. Swift found a valuable successor in Tickell the poet, surviving friend and literary executor of Addison. He was secretary to the Lords Justices of Ireland, an office of high trust, and he often employed the interest which it gave him in compliance with Swift's recommendations. The Dean does not seem to have approved or shared the resentment of his

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* The first part of Percival's verses allude to the house-keeping at the Deanery, while Sterne held that preferment.—

A DESCRIPTION,

IN ANSWER TO THE JOURNAL. DUBLIN, 1722.

NEAR St. Sepulchre's stands a building
Which, as report goes, ne'er had child in:
The house is large, and to adorn her,
From garret down to chimney corner,
The upper chambers were well lined
With antique books and books new coin'd;
Which plainly show'd its founder's head
With learning of all sorts supplied.
The house on every part was stored
To entertain the greatest lord;
Nor did the poorest meet disdain,
But fill'd his belly with his brain.
The kitchen grate, like Vesta's altar,
Had fire in't whene'er you call'd, sir.
There were appointed vestal dames
To stir up the devouring flames.
On these were laid fat pigs and geese,
All beasts and fowls for sacrifice.
The sea itself could not escape,
For fish of all sorts here would gape,
And bleed, soles, salmons, lobsters, cods
To gratify the hungry gods;
And to drive off the mind's dejection,
Wit flew about, but no reflection;

friend Pope against Mr. Tickell, but maintained an intimate and friendly intercourse with him till his death.

From these studies and amusements the Dean was roused in the year 1720, and again appeared on the stage as a political writer, no longer, indeed, the advocate and apologist of a ministry, but the undaunted and energetic defender of the rights of an oppressed people. No nation ever needed more a patriotic defender than Ireland at this period. The portion of prosperity which she had enjoyed under the princes of the House of Stuart, had been interrupted by a civil war, the issue of which sent the flower of her native gentry, as well as her best and bravest soldiers, into foreign exile. The Catholic part of the community laboured under disqualifications of various kinds, and, above all, under a suspicion of disaffection, the most insurmountable incapacity of all. They sought their safety in remaining quiescent, well aware that every complaint originating with them would be construed into the murmurs of rebellion. The Irish Protestants, or, as Swift himself loves to term them, the English settled in Ireland, were divided among themselves into Whigs and Tories, Churchmen and Dissenters, and a hundred lesser factions, fomented by petty political leaders, who found their interest in dissensions, which raised them

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To keep the spirits in vibration,
Wine join'd with wit for the libation.
The Dean was small, his soul was large;
He knew his duty to discharge;
He loved his chapter, treated all
His dignitaries, vicars choral,
From Tallboy down to little Worrall.
In short, he lived, and that's what few can
Justly report of Swift our new Dean.
He sometimes to a chapter goes
With saucy strut and turn'd-up nose,
Leans on his cushion, then he'll bid ye,
Hearken to what all know already.
Perhaps he'll sneer or break a jest,
But de'il a bit to break your fast.
Go when you please, let the clock strike
What hour it will, 'tis all alike.
Some country Preb. comes just at one
In hopes to dine, and so begone.
The Dean appears:—"I'm glad to see you,
Pray tell what service I can do you.
Be quick, for I am going out."
The hungry Levite's vex'd no doubt,
To be thus baulk'd; tucks up his gown,
Makes a low scrape, and so to town:
Is welcome there, so makes a shift
To drink a glass and rail at Swift.
But of this farce you'll know the reason,
You shall, I'm sure it can't be treason.
He dines abroad you think—mistaken,
He dines at home on sprouts and bacon.

into notice and consequence. England, whose councils have been sometimes too easily swayed by a narrow-souled, and short-sighted mercantile interest, availed herself of the unhappy state of the sister kingdom, to degrade her into a subdued province, instead of strengthening the empire by elevating her into an integral part. The power of legislating for Ireland was assumed by the English Parliament, though contrary to principle and precedent; and it was so exercised, as to fetter, as far as possible, the commerce of the kingdom, and render it subordinate to, and dependent upon that of England. The statutes of 10th and 11th William III. prohibited the exportation of all Irish woollen goods, excepting into England and Wales, and thus, at once, ruined the woollen manufactories of Ireland, worth upwards of an annual million, and drove the staplers into a smuggling trade with France, by which the Irish wool was exported to that country, to the great benefit of the manufactures recently established in Picardy. Ireland did not want patriots to state these grievances. Molyneux, the friend of Locke, and of liberty, published, in 1698, "The Case of Ireland's being bound by Acts of Parliament in England, stated;" in which he showed, with great force, that the right of legislation, of which England made so oppressive an use, was neither justified by the plea of conquest, purchase, or precedent, and was only

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Besides, his two chief slaves are missing,
To boil his drink and broil his grisking,
Pert Jack and Robin, I mean Grattan,
As suppliant slaves as e'er had hat on;
Such slaves as these you know delight him,
Who're sure to trudge when he invites 'em;
And that's as often as in his kitchen
A fire is made to broil a pigeon.
The seventeenth of March each year,
The chapter meets to make good cheer.
The Dean's allowed five pounds or more,
To entertain about half a score.
You're sure to meet a handsome dish,
Of salmon, or some other fish;
A dish of soup, a leg of mutton,
By servants are the table put on;
A plate with puddings then next comes,
One plain, one almond, t'other plums:
The second course adorns the table,
With loin of beef most formidable;
A salad, with a dish of fowl,
Of this huge treat makes up the whole.
Now if some critic should accost him,
And ask how much this dinner cost him,
He could not say that he had lost
Any great matter by the roast;
The treat, just as the Dean bespoke it
Put two pound ten into his pocket,
Besides, the fragments of the feast
Will feed his house a week at least.

submitted to from incapacity of effectual resistance. The temper of the English House of Commons did not brook this remonstrance. It was unanimously voted that these bold and pernicious assertions were calculated to shake the subordination and dependence of Ireland; as united and annexed for ever to the crown of England; and the vote of the House was followed by an address to the queen, complaining that, although the woollen trade was the staple manufacture of England, over which her legislature was accustomed to watch with the utmost care, yet Ireland, which was dependent upon, and protected by England, not contented with the linen manufacture, the liberty whereof was indulged to her, presumed also to apply her credit and capital to the weaving of her own wool into woollen cloths, to the great detriment of England, &c. &c. &c. Not a voice was raised in the British House of Commons, to contradict maxims equally impolitic and tyrannical, and which were much more worthy of the monopolizing corporation of some peddling borough, than of the enlightened senate of a free people. In acting upon these commercial restrictions, wrong was heaped upon wrong, and insult was added to injury, with this advantage on the side of the aggressors, that they could intimidate the injured people of Ireland into silence, by raising, to drown every complaint, the cry of rebel and of Jacobite.

These evils Swift beheld with all the natural ardour of a disposition which rose in opposition to tyranny. "Do not," said he to Delany,

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As for himself, with draggled gown,
Poor-curate-like, he'll trudge the town,
To eat a meal with punster base,
Or buffoon call him, if you please.
Sometimes to Gallstown he will go,
To spend a month or two, or so,
Admires the baron, George and's spouse.
Lives well, and then lampoons the house.
Thus far our bard in doggrel rhyme,
In the Dean's kitchen, spent his time;
He's dull, because there is no fire,
Or wine, his rustic muse t'inspire.
But let's proceed from these poor tricks
O' th' kitchen to his politics.
They stare, and think he knows as well
All depths of state as Machiavel.
It must be so, since from him flows,
Whate'er the Earl of Oxford knows.
He swears the project of the peace
Was laid by him in Anna's days.
The South Sea ne'er could have miscarried
As he contrived, but others marr'd it:
Thus he goes on two hours and more,
And tells the same thing o'er and o'er.
The darkest plots he can unravel,
And split them ope from the head to th' navel.
What dire effects o'er bandbox hover'd,
Venice preserved, the plot's discover'd.

"the corruption and villainies of men eat your flesh and exhaust your spirits?"* The fire, in the words of the inspired writer, burned within him, and in 1720, he gave vent to his indignation in the short treatise, entitled, "A Proposal for the universal Use of Irish Manufactures, &c. utterly rejecting and renouncing everything wearable that comes from England." In appreciating the courage of Swift in recommending a measure so obnoxious to the principles upon which Ireland had hitherto been governed, we must remember he was himself a marked and even a proscribed man, intimately connected with the measures of that minister, whose period of power was now usually termed the *worst of times*. The system of non-importation, which he recommends as a just retort upon the engrossing spirit of English commerce, was likely to excite hatred and alarm among the powerful bodies, who, from self-interest or prepossession, took an interest in the monopoly: and there were unfortunately both judges and courts of justice with whom that alarm would have fearful influence. And all these risks Swift was contented to incur, for the sake of a country to which he came as to a land of banishment; which had received him with public expressions of insult and contumely; and to which, on every occasion, he expressed a rooted aversion. He incurred them also without the possibility of any other reward than attends the conscience of a patriot who has discharged his duty.

The storm which he had dared, was not long of bursting. It was intimated to Lord Chief-Justice Whitshed by "a person in great office," that Swift's pamphlet was written for the purpose of setting the two kingdoms at variance, and it was recommended that the printer should be prosecuted with the uttermost rigour. Whitshed was not a person to neglect such a hint; and the arguments of government were so successful, that the grand juries of the county and city presented the Dean's tract as a seditious, factious, and virulent libel. Waters, the printer, was seized, and forced to give great bail. But upon his trial, the jury, though some pains had been bestowed in selecting them, brought him in not guilty; and it was not until they were worn out by the threats of the lord chief-justice, who detained them eleven hours, and sent them out nine times to reconsider their verdict, that they at length, reluctantly, left the matter in his hands, by a special verdict. But the measures of Whitshed were too violent

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Venice here stands for's great Mæcenas,
The Earl of Oxford, not Æneas.
And yet when all is done and said,
A "Tale of a Tub" fills up his head.
Thus having given a description,
Of this great wit and politician,
I now surrender my commission.

* Delany having replied in the negative, "Why," answered the Dean in a fury, "how can you help it?" "Because I am commanded to the contrary," rejoined his friend,—"fret not thyself because of the ungodly."

to be of real service to the government. Men's minds revolted against his iniquitous conduct, and the trial of the verdict was deferred from term to term, until the arrival of the Duke of Grafton, the lord-lieutenant. A *noli prosequi* was then granted, which left the advantage, if not the honour of victory, with Swift and the patriots of Ireland. He failed not to improve it; for, as a victorious general sends off his light troops in pursuit of a routed enemy, he persecuted Lord Chief-Justice Whitshed, and Godfrey Boate, a judge of the King's Bench, who had also distinguished himself in the trial of the printer, by such an unrelenting train of lampoons and epigrams, as at once made his satirical powers dreaded, and excited, against the offenders and their memory, the odium which their conduct had deservedly excited.

The proposal of a National Bank next alarmed the vigilance of the Dean. This scheme, however useful when the principles of commercial credit are established and understood, was made at a time when chimerical schemes of every possible kind were circulated in such abundance, as if it had been the intention of the projectors to gauge the utmost extent of human credulity. Not only were public trading companies proposed for the most ridiculous and extravagant purposes, as introducing the breed of asses, (which seems to have been unnecessary at that period,) sweeping the streets, maintaining illegitimate children, &c., but one ingenious projector actually obtained subscriptions to a large extent, and some advance in ready money upon each, for a project, the object of which he declined to explain farther, than by promising a return to the adventurers of cent. per cent. At such a crisis, and when the petition to Parliament for a bank was but supported by a few obscure stock-jobbers, Swift saw it could only produce national disappointment and distress, and wrote three or four satirical essays, burlesquing the proposal itself, and ridiculing those who had subscribed to it. The Irish parliament being of the Dean's opinion, the project was rejected in the ensuing session.

The execution of one Elliston, a noted street-robber, gave Swift an opportunity of exercising that remarkable versatility of composition, by which he could assume any character which he choose to personate. The effect of this piece was to put an end, for many years, to the practice of street-robbery; for, being received as genuine by the companions of the sufferer, they really believed, as there asserted, that he had left a list of their names to be proceeded against, if they did not relinquish their evil courses. Some other trifles were published by the Dean about this time, and in general the eyes of the people of Ireland began to be turned towards him, as one who was not likely to be silent in asserting her rights. But his opposition to Wood's project raised him at once to the summit of popularity, and forms one of the most remarkable points in his history.

There being a deficiency of copper coinage in Ireland, the king, in

1723, granted to William Wood, upon certain conditions, the patent right of coining halfpence and farthings to the extent of 108,000*l.*, to be current in that kingdom. Abstractedly, there could be no objection to this mode of supplying the want of copper, providing the coinage was of proper weight and quality. But the patent had been obtained in what may be termed a surreptitious manner, through the influence of the Duchess of Kendal, the mistress of George I., to whom Wood had promised a share of the profits. It was passed without consulting either the lord-lieutenant or privy council of Ireland; and, in devolving upon an obscure individual the right of exercising one of the highest privileges of the crown, the dignity of the kingdom was disgracefully compromised. The Irish parliament felt the insult, and caught the alarm; and the family of Broderick, then almost the chief of the Whig interest, from conviction, or from dislike to the lord-lieutenant, or from a mixture of these motives, threw their weight into the scale of opposition, and, by their countenance, secured those who made it from the charge of disaffection. While the struggle was impending, the voice of Swift was heard in the celebrated "Drapier's Letters,"—strong in argument, and brilliant in humour, but unequalled in the address with which those arguments are selected, and that humour applied. It cannot be supposed that he really considered Wood's project, simply and abstractedly, as of a ruinous, or even dangerous tendency. There was, doubtless, a risk of abuse; but, setting that apart, the supply of copper money which it provided was advantageous, and even necessary to Ireland. Nor was the hazard of Wood's misusing the patent so great, but what might easily be guarded against. The halfpence of William Wood were remarkably handsome, and well executed, as appears from the engraving prefixed to the "Drapier's Letters," the gift of the learned Dr. Hill of Dublin to the editor; and they were proved by the experiments at the Mint, under the direction of Sir Isaac Newton, to equal, or exceed, in weight, purity, and value, coins of the same denomination in England. That the coinage was exposed to be counterfeited, is an evil incidental to current money of every description; but precautions were taken that the patentee himself should not lower its value, by the nomination of a comptroller on the part of the crown to inspect and assay from time to time the copper, whether coined or uncoined. It may be doubtful whether, in the abstract, a more economical and unexceptionable mode of supplying the acknowledged want of copper money in Ireland, could have been devised by government,

But, as already hinted, the danger and dishonour of the measure lay in its application to Ireland in its existing state. Within the last thirty years, repeated and oppressive steps had been taken to reduce this ancient kingdom, though still retaining the outward insignia of national legislation and sovereignty, into the condition of a conquered province, bound by the acts of the British Parliament, where she had

neither friend, patron, nor representative.* The aphorism that Ireland was, and ought to be, dependent on Britain in this servile sense, had not only been loudly pronounced, with a denunciation of vengeance against those who should dare to deny it, but it had been already acted upon. Ireland was subjected to a commercial slavery, which left neither her credit, her commodities, nor her havens at her own disposal; and how long the civil and domestic freedom of her people might be spared, was a question which seemed to depend on the moderation of those who usurped the right of being her legislators. Such was the condition of the kingdom when Wood's scheme was brought forward; a measure therefore, of far less importance in its real merit, than as it necessarily involved the grand question of the servitude or independence of Ireland. That the king should, without the consent either of the Irish parliament or privy council, delegate a branch of his prerogative to a private projector, give, as it were in farm, to an ordinary contractor or mechanic, the exercise of a privilege, which has, in every country, been deemed a peculiar and unalienable attribute of regal power, indicated such a contempt for the very form of independence, that where decency was so little consulted, the patriots of Ireland were justified in apprehending consequences still more fatal, and more arbitrary. The language of Wood himself, who imprudently boasted of his favour with Walpole, and threatened that his coin should be imposed upon the Irish by force, if rejected upon fair terms, was at once irritating and alarming. The formality of a vice-regal court, the supposed representative of majesty, and depositary of the executive power in Ireland, would only in future be necessary to hold levees, and give birthday balls, while the essential exercise of the royal prerogative might be exercised in England, or leased out by wholesale to adventurers and projectors, with power to them, like the farmers-general of France, to call in military assistance where opposition required it. Thus deprived alike of the power of making and of executing her own laws, the kingdom must have remained mocked with the semblance of a court, a parliament, and a free government; forms serving only to irritate the people with the recollection of the rights which were no longer protected or enforced. Such was the state of Ireland; and the inference which might fairly be drawn from the disrespectful and unceremonious manner in which the sovereign's right of coinage was exercised in the case of William Wood. But to have proclaimed this truth, would have been construed into a misdemeanour, little short of high treason; and Swift had in recollection the example of Molyneux, as well as his own narrow escape on the publication of his Proposal for encouraging Irish manufactures. He took his ground, therefore, with infinite

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* And all this in despite not only of national law and reason, but of the express maxim adopted so early as the reign of Richard III. *Hibernia habet parliamentum et faciunt leges: et nostra statuta non ligant eos quia non mittunt milites ad parliamentum.*

address and caution, and confined himself, in opening the controversy, to the objections which applied to Wood's project in detail, cautiously veiling the grand question of national right, which was necessarily involved in the discussion.

The first three letters of M. B., Drapier in Dublin, dwell, therefore, upon arguments against Wood's halfpence, derived from their alleged inferiority in weight and value, and the indifferent or suspicious character of the projector himself. These arguments, also, had the advantage of being directly applicable to the grosser apprehensions of the "tradesmen, shopkeepers, farmers, and country people," to whom they are professedly addressed. Such persons, though incapable of understanding, or being moved by the discussion of a theoretical national right, could well comprehend, that the pouring into Ireland a quantity of copper coinage, alleged to be so base in denomination, that twelve pence were not intrinsically worth more than a penny, must necessarily drain the country of gold and silver, and occasion great individual loss, as well as national distress. The bitter and satirical passages against Wood himself were also well adapted to the taste of the vulgar, whose callous palate is peculiarly excited by the pungency of personal satire. Whether Swift himself believed the exaggerated reports which his tracts circulated concerning the baseness of the coin, and the villainy of the projector, we have no means of discovering. Once satisfied of the general justice of his cause, he may have deemed himself at liberty to plead it by such arguments as were most likely to afford it support, without rigid examination of their individual validity, or, (which is most likely,) like most warm disputants, he may himself have received with eager faith, averments so necessary to the success of his plan. But it is certain, that, in these first three letters, the king, the minister, the mistress, and the British privy-council, are not mentioned, or treated with studied respect; while the whole guilt and evil of the scheme are imputed to the knavery of William Wood, who, from an obscure ironmonger, had become an avaricious and unprincipled projector, ready and eager to ruin the whole kingdom of Ireland, in order to secure an exorbitant profit to himself.

The ferment produced by a statement so open to the comprehension, and so irritating to the feelings, of the nation at large, became unspeakably formidable. Both the Irish Houses of Parliament joined in addressing the Crown against Wood's scheme. Parties of all denominations, whether religious or political, for once united in expressing their abhorrence of the detested halfpence. The tradesmen to whom the coin was consigned, refused to receive them, and endeavoured, by public advertisement, to remove the scandal of being concerned in the accursed traffic. Even Wood's near relatives were compelled to avert public indignation, by disavowing all concern with his contract.*

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* See the advertisement of John and Daniel Molyneux, ironmongers, ("Swift's Works,") one of whom I take to have been Wood's brother-in-law.

greatly encouraged the discontents of Ireland, trusting that all the odium would be imputed to Walpole. But his interest in the cabinet gradually sunk before that of his rival, who unable, perhaps, to remove Carteret entirely from office, enjoyed the refined revenge of sending him to Ireland as lord-lieutenant, in the room of the Duke of Grafton, with the injunction of carrying on Wood's project if it were possible; but otherwise with permission to drop it, by the suspension or surrender of the patent. But ere Carteret arrived on the scene, to extinguish the fire which he himself had fanned, the discussion had begun to assume its real character.

It was now obvious, from the temper of Ireland, that the true point of difference between the countries might safely be brought before the public. In the Drapier's fourth letter, accordingly, Swift boldly treats of the royal prerogative, of the almost exclusive employment of natives of England in places of trust and emolument in Ireland; of the dependency of that kingdom upon England, and the power assumed, contrary to truth, reason, and justice of binding her by the laws of a Parliament in which she had no representation. It is boldly affirmed, (though in terms the most guarded,) that the revolutions of England no farther affected Ireland, than as they were consonant to freedom and liberty; and that, should an insurrection fix a new prince on the throne of the sister kingdom, the Irish might still lawfully resist his possessing himself of theirs. The threats of the English ministers to enforce the currency of Wood's halfpence by violent measures, are next alluded to; and the Drapier concludes this part of his reasoning in the following very marked passage: "The remedy is wholly in your own hands, and, therefore, I have digressed a little, in order to refresh and continue that spirit so seasonably raised among you, and to let you see, that, by the laws of GOD, of NATURE, of NATIONS, and of your COUNTRY, you ARE, and OUGHT to be, as FREE a people as your brethren in England."

This tract pressed at once upon the real merits of the question at issue, and the alarm was instantly taken by the English government. The necessity of supporting their domination devolved upon Carteret, who was just landed; and, accordingly a proclamation was issued, offering 300*l.* reward for the discovery of the author of the Drapier's fourth letter, described as a wicked and malicious pamphlet, containing several seditious and scandalous passages, highly reflecting upon his majesty and his ministers, and tending to alienate the affections of his good subjects in England and Ireland from each other. Harding, the printer of the "Drapier's Letters," was thrown into prison, and a prosecution directed against him, at the instance of the Crown. Swift, bold in the merit of his cause, and in the support of the people, was not to be appalled by this menacing procedure: He went to the levee of the lord-lieutenant, burst through the circle with which he was surrounded, and, in a firm and stern voice, demanded of Lord Carteret the meaning of these severities against a poor industrious tradesman, who had published two or three papers, designed for the

Associations were formed for refusing their currency; and these extended from the wealthy corporation of Dublin down to the hawkers and errand-boys, who announced to their employers, that they would not receive, nor offer in change, Wood's drossy halfpence, since they could "neither get news, ale, tobacco, nor brandy, for such cursed stuff." The matter being thus adopted by the mob, they proceeded according to their usual custom; made riotous processions, and burned the unfortunate projector in effigy. In short, such was the state of the public mind, that it was unsafe for any one to be supposed favourable to Wood's project.

Swift, finding the people in a disposition so favourable for the maintaining their rights, did not suffer their zeal to cool for lack of fuel. Not satisfied with writing, he preached against Wood's halfpence. One of his sermons is preserved, and bears the title "On doing good." It verifies his own account, that he preached not sermons, but political pamphlets. At his instigation, also, the grand jury, and principal inhabitants of the liberty of St. Patrick's, joined in an association for refusing this odious coin. Besides the celebrated "Drapier's Letters," he supplied the hawkers with a variety of ballads and prose satires, seasoned with all the bitterness and pungency of his wit, directing the popular indignation against the contractor, without sparing some very intelligible innuendos against his patrons and abettors in England. By such means the timid were encouraged, the doubtful confirmed, the audacious inflamed, and the attention of the public so riveted to the discussion, that it was no longer shocked at the discussion of the more delicate questions which it involved: and the viceroy and his advisers complained, that any proposition, however libellous and treasonable, was now published without hesitation, and perused without horror, providing that Wood and his halfpence could be introduced into the tract. The Duke of Grafton (then lord-lieutenant) found himself unable to stem the popular torrent; and it became evident, that the scheme, if enforced, would occasion a civil war.

In this emergency Walpole was not wanting to himself. His first object was, if possible, to appease the general ferment, by such a composition as to the extent of the proposed issue of coin, as would leave unquestioned the assumed right to utter it. He therefore endeavoured to let the scheme drop gradually, by a proclamation which limited the issue of halfpence to 40,000*l.* instead of 108,000*l.* And when this failed, he contrived, by a bold turn of political intrigue, to impose the task of enforcing Wood's project, and subduing the discontent of the Irish, upon a rival statesman, who was supposed to have had no small share in obstructing the one, and fomenting the other. This was the celebrated Lord Carteret, then secretary of state, learned, accomplished, eloquent, ambitious, and a personal favourite of his sovereign. He had maintained a war of intrigue in the interior of the cabinet, against Walpole, and his brother-in-law, Townsend; and by caballing with the Brodericks, and furnishing, it was said, the private history of the mode in which Wood's patent was obtained, he had

good of his country. Carteret, to whom Swift was personally well known, and who could have no doubt of his being the author of the "Drapier's Letters," evaded the expostulation, by an apt and elegant quotation from Virgil:—

> Res dura, et regni novitas, me talia cogunt
> Moliri.

The courtly circle, astounded at the daring conduct of Swift, were delighted and reassured by the lord-lieutenant's presence of mind and urbanity.

Two other anecdotes occurred, which served to show the bold, stern, and uncompromising temper of the Dean. The first is well known: A servant, named Robert Blakeley, whom he intrusted to copy out, and convey to the press the "Drapier's Letters," chanced one evening to absent himself without leave. His master charged him with treachery, and, upon his exculpation, insisted that at least he neglected his duties as a servant, because he conceived his master was in his power. "Strip your livery," he commanded, "begone from the Deanery instantly, and do the worst to revenge yourself that you dare do." The man retired, more grieved that his master doubted his fidelity, than moved by this harsh treatment. He was replaced at the intercession of Stella; and Swift afterwards rewarded his fidelity, by the office of verger in the cathedral of St. Patrick's. The other anecdote bears, that while Harding was in jail, Swift actually visited him in the disguise of an Irish country clown, or *spalpeen*. Some of the printer's family or friends, who chanced to visit him at the same time, were urging him to earn his own release, by informing against the author of the "Drapier's Letters." Harding replied steadily, that he would rather perish in jail before he would be guilty of such treachery and baseness. All this passed in Swift's presence, who sat beside them in silence, and heard, with apparent indifference, a discussion which might be said to involve his ruin. He came and departed without being knowu to any one but Harding.

When the bill against the printer of the "Drapier's Letters" was about to be presented to the grand jury, Swift addressed to that body a paper, entitled "Seasonable Advice," exhorting them to remember the story of the league made by the wolves with the sheep, on condition of their parting with their shepherds and mastiffs, after which they ravaged the flock at pleasure. A few spirited verses addressed to the citizens at large, and enforcing similar topics, are subscribed by the Drapier's initials, and are doubtless Swift's own composition. Alluding to the charge that he had gone too far in leaving the discussion of Wood's project to treat of the alleged dependence of Ireland, he concludes in these lines:—

> If, then, oppression has not quite subdued,
> At once, your prudence and your gratitude;
> If you yourselves conspire not your undoing,
> And don't deserve, and won't draw down your ruin;

If yet to virtue you have some pretence;
If yet you are not lost to common sense,
Assist your patriot in your own defence.
That stupid cant, He went too far, despise,
And know, that to be brave is to be wise:
Think how he struggled for your liberty,
And give him freedom, whilst yourselves are free.

At the same time was circulated the memorable and apt quotation from scripture, by a Quaker:—"And the people said unto Saul, shall Jonathan die, who has wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid: As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan that he died not." Thus admonished by verse, law, and scripture, the grand-jury assembled. It was in vain that the same Lord Chief-Justice Whitshed, who had caused the Dean's former tract to be denounced as seditious, and procured a verdict against the printer, exerted himself strenuously upon this similar occasion. The hour of intimidation was past, and the grand-jury, conscious of what the country expected from them, brought in a verdict of *ignoramus* upon the bill. Whitshed, after demanding, unconstitutionally, and with indecorous violence, the reasons of their verdict, could only gratify his impotent resentment, like his prototype Scroggs, on a similar occasion, by dissolving the grand-jury. They returned into the mass of general society, honoured and thanked for the part which they had acted, and the chief-justice, on the contrary, was execrated for his arbitrary conduct. Such means would injure a good cause, and unless supported by tyrannical force, can never prop a bad one. The next grand-jury of the county and city of Dublin presented Wood's scheme as a fraud and imposition on the public, and omitted not to express their gratitude to those patriots by whom it had been exposed. Three other Drapier's letters were published by Swift, not only in order to follow up his victory, but for explaining more decidedly the cause in which it had been won. The fifth letter is addressed to Lord Molesworth, and has for its principal object a justification of the former letters, and a charge of oppression and illegality, founded upon the proceedings against the author and printer. The sixth letter is addressed to Lord Chancellor Middleton, who strenuously opposed Wood's project, and resigned his office in consequence of the displeasure of the court being expressed on account of such resistance. It is written in the Dean's person, who pleads the cause of the Drapier, and, from several passages, does not appear anxious to conceal his identity. This also relates chiefly to the conduct of Whitshed, and the merits of the prosecution against Harding. The seventh letter, though last published, appears to have been composed shortly after the fourth. It enters widely into the national complaints of Ireland and illustrates what has been already mentioned, that the project of Wood was only chosen as an ostensible and favourable point on which to make a stand against principles of aggression, which involved many

questions of much more vital importance. This letter was not published until the Drapier's papers were collected into a volume. Meantime Carteret yielded to the storm,—Wood's patent was surrendered,—and the patentee indemnified by a grant of 3000*l.* yearly, for twelve years. Thus victoriously terminated the first grand struggle for the independence of Ireland.

The eyes of the kingdom were now turned with one consent on the man, by whose unbending fortitude and pre-eminent talents this triumph was accomplished. The Drapier's head became a sign, his portrait was engraved, woven upon handkerchiefs, struck upon medals, and displayed in every possible manner, as the liberator of Ireland. A club was formed in honour of the patriot, who held regular meetings to commemorate his excellence, study his doctrines, and carouse to his health. In all this, Swift's popularity did not probably exceed that of other patriots, who, at some decisive and critical period, have had the fortune to render a striking service to their country. Nor is it singular that the Dean's memory should, after death, be honourably and tenderly cherished by the nation which he did so much to rescue from subjection. But the period between the deeds on which a patriot rests his fame, and the time when they are recorded on his tombstone, is but rarely distinguished by the unclouded and steady glow of uniform popularity. History affords, in all countries, too many instances of the mutability of public favour, and exhibits a long list of those benefactors of nations who have heard the songs composed in their praise turned into libellous parodies, and the acclamations of their countrymen exchanged for as loud and general shouts of reprobation or derision. To the honour of the warm-hearted and generous people for whom he exposed his safety, the sun of Swift's popularity shone unclouded even after he was incapable of distinguishing its radiance. While he was able to go abroad, a thousand popular benedictions attended his steps, and if he visited a town where he was not usually resident, his reception resembled that of a sovereign prince. The slightest idea of personal danger to THE DEAN, for by that title he was generally distinguished, aroused a whole district in his defence; and when, on one occasion, Walpole meditated his arrest, his proposal was checked by a prudent friend, who enquired if he could spare ten thousand soldiers to guard the messenger who should execute so perilous a commission. His foibles, though of a kind which seem peculiarly obnoxious to the observation and censure of the vulgar, were overlooked with the pious respect paid by filial affection to the imperfections of a parent. The governors of Ireland, from the courtly Carteret to the haughty Dorset, even while disliking his politics, if not his person, saw themselves under the necessity of respecting his influence, and temporizing with his zeal. And as he was mourned in his last stage of imbecility, and followed to the grave by the lamentations of his people, so there have been few Irish authors who have not since that period paid to the memory of Swift that tribute of gratitude, which is so peculiarly his due.

One of the latest, as well as the most eloquent panegyrics which have decorated his monument, occurs in "A Sketch of the State of Ireland, past and present," published in 1810. With the just and concise character of the Dean of St. Patrick's, viewed as an Irish patriot, we close the present chapter.

"On this gloom one luminary rose, and Ireland worshipped it with Persian idolatry; her true patriot—her first, almost her last. Sagacious and intrepid—he saw, he dared; above suspicion, he was trusted; above envy, he was beloved; above rivalry, he was obeyed. His wisdom was practical and prophetic—remedial for the present, warning for the future; he first taught Ireland that she might cease to be ruled by a despot. But he was a churchman. His gown impeded his course, and entangled his efforts,—guiding a senate, or heading an army, he had been more than Cromwell, and Ireland not less than England. As it was, he saved her by his courage—improved her by his authority—adorned her by his talents—and exalted her by his fame. His mission was but of ten years; and for ten years only did his personal power mitigate the government; but though no longer feared by the great, he was not forgotten by the wise; his influence, like his writings, has survived a century; and the foundations of whatever prosperity we have since erected, are laid in the disinterested and magnanimous patriotism of Swift."

CHAPTER VI.

Swift retires to Quilca—His friendship for Sheridan—He visits England—Has an audience of Walpole—Becomes known at the Prince of Wales's Court—Returns to Ireland and publishes "Gulliver's Travels"—He revisits England—And is recalled by Stella's indisposition—Her death—Swift breaks with the Court and Minister—His writings on Irish affairs—He quarrels with Lord Allen—Is intimate with Carteret—A letter is forged in his name to the Queen—His Miscellaneous Prose Writings about this period—His Poems—His residence at Gossford with Sir Arthur Acheson, and the verses which were written there.

WHEN Wood's project appeared to be on the verge of being abandoned, Swift, as if desirous of escaping from the popular applause which hailed him from every quarter, retreated with Mrs. Dingley and Mrs. Johnson to Quilca, a small country house belonging to his intimate friend Dr. Sheridan, in a wild and sequestered situation, about seven miles from the town of Kells. In this retirement, where the want of accommodation became the subject of one or two of those pieces of humour, which he has called *family trifles*, he remained for several months. He seems to have meditated a final blow at Wood and his halfpence: but hearing the patent was resigned,

he stopped the publication of the intended treatise. This was probably the seventh letter, which did not appear until the Dean's works were collected, in 1735. Meanwhile, the inadvertence of his friend Sheridan engaged him in a very troublesome affair, in which Swift laboured hard to protect and assist him.

Dr. Sheridan, highly respectable for wit, learning, and an uncommon talent for the education of youth, and no less distinguished by his habits of abstraction and absence, and by a simplicity of character which ill suited with his worldly interest, had been Swift's friend of every mood and of all hours, since the Dean's final retirement into Ireland. A happy art of meeting and answering the raillery of his friend, and of writing with facility verses upon domestic jests or occasional incidents, amused Swift's lighter moments, while Sheridan's sound and extensive erudition enlightened those which were more serious. It was in his society that Swift renewed his acquaintance with classical learning, and perused the works which amused his retirement. In the invitations sent to the Dean, Sheridan was always included; nor was Swift to be seen in perfect good humour, unless when he made part of the company. Indeed, Sheridan understood the Dean's temper so well, and knew so happily how to arrest, by some sudden stroke of humour, those fits of violent irritability to which Swift's mind was liable, as his outward frame was to those of vertigo, that he was termed, among their common friends, the David who alone could play the evil spirit out of Saul. Swift was not insensible of the value of such a friend, nor unwilling to repay his services by every means in his power. His high rank and character enabled him to promote the flourishing state of Sheridan's school, which was then the first in the kingdom. But the improvidence of the generous but imprudent teacher, frustrated the kind intentions of his patron; for with a wife and increasing family, his expenses kept pace with his income; and Swift saw with regret that nothing but a removal from the capital would prevent his being ultimately in distressed circumstances. With this friendly purpose, the Dean obtained from the Lord-Primate Lindsay, an offer of the richly endowed school of Armagh for Sheridan. But the specious arguments of some persons who pretended to be the well-wishers of this unsuspicious and single-hearted character prevailed upon him to decline this offer. He had leisure to reflect upon his folly, when, some years afterwards, the same individuals countenanced another school in opposition to his, and at length compelled him to abandon Dublin.* But before this event took place, Swift had availed himself of another opportunity to serve him.

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* In answer to a letter ("Swift's Works") in which Sheridan complains of his insidious friends, who lulled him asleep until they stole his school into the hands of a blockhead, Swift says, "I own you have too much reason to complain of some friends, who, next to yourself, have done you most hurt; whom I still esteem and frequent, although I confess I cannot heartily forgive. Yet

Lord Carteret, notwithstanding the prosecution of Harding, and the proclamation offering a reward for the discovery of the Drapier, was a friend of Swift, and so far coincided in his political opinions, as to be a secret enemy of Walpole. Thus it was twice Swift's singular fortune to have proclamations sent forth against him, under the authority of ministers, who were not only his personal friends, but who approved in secret of the very treatises against which their public manifestoes were fulminated. Besides, Carteret felt that he had been sent to Ireland only to exercise a nominal vice-sovereignty, while the real power was lodged with the primate Boulter, and he was not averse to form a sort of independent party to balance, in some degree, those violent ministerialists by whom he was watched and surrounded. Accordingly, Swift had afterwards occasion, in one of his most happy ironical compositions, to vindicate the lord-lieutenant from the charge of conferring favours and preferments upon persons disaffected to the king's government.

Through the recommendation of Swift, and from Carteret's own disposition to encourage learning, of which he was a perfect judge, Dr. Sheridan was named one of the lord-lientenant's chaplains, and presented with a small living near Cork. But, alas! while thus mounted on the first round of the ladder of preferment, he had the inadvertence to kick it from beneath him. When he went to Cork to be inducted in his living, Sheridan undertook to preach for Archdeacon Russel of that city, and, without considering that it was the anniversary of the accession of the House of Hanover, he selected a sermon, which had for the text, "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." It proved, at least, an evil day for Sheridan, who, as Swift expressed it, shot his fortune dead by chance-medley with this single text. Richard Tighe, a man, according to the Dean, of no great dimensions, either of body or mind, but mighty in zeal for the House of Hanover and Protestant succession, carried the report full speed to the Castle of Dublin, exaggerating the offence, by alluding to Sheridan's suspected disaffection. Swift, on the other hand, exerted every effort to save his friend from the too probable consequences of this inadvertence. He applied to the lord-lieutenant himself, and to Mr. Tickell, distinguished by his poems, whose friendship was a legacy from Addison to Swift, and who was now secretary to the lords-justices. But Carteret durst not adventure to give such scandal to the ruling party, as the overlooking this important misdemeanor might have implied. Sheridan was therefore disgraced at the viceregal court, and struck from the list of chaplains. He was in part consoled by the generosity of Archdeacon Russel, who, considering himself as having given occasion to his misfortune, had the munificence to

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certainly the case was not merely personal malice to you (although it had the same effects) but a kind of I know not what job, which one of them has heartily repented." I suspect Delany to be the person here indicated. He had no good-will to Sheridan.

present him with the manor of Drumlane, worth one hundred and fifty pounds yearly. But the demerits of the informer were never pardoned or forgotten by Swift, who made a vow, and kept it well, to persecute Tighe with satire, and never to quit him living or dead.*

This misfortune of Sheridan embittered the Dean's residence at Quilca, which was otherwise agreeable. His time was chiefly spent in acting as Sheridan's bailiff, overseeing his labourers, and executing plans of improvement for the pleasure of surprising him when vacation permitted him to visit the country.† His literary employment was the finishing, correcting, amending, and transcribing "Gulliver's Travels," to be published, he intimates, so soon as he could find a printer courageous enough to venture his ears. He admitted Sheridan to this secret labour, but when Tickell expressed curiosity to see the treatise on which he was at work, he frankly informed him, that it totally disagreed with his notions of persons and things, and, as if conscious of writing to a Secretary of State, he adds, it would be impossible for Mr. Tickell to find his treasury of waste papers without searching nine houses, and then sending to him for the key. Having completed this celebrated work, the Dean resolved, for the first time since the death of Queen Anne, to revisit England, a purpose which he accomplished in spring, 1726.

Bolingbroke now returned from his exile, Pope, Arbuthnot, Gay, Bathurst, and other old friends, received him with open arms, and with the melancholy pleasure of sailors who meet after a shipwreck, from which they have escaped by different means.

Amongst these friends, Pope, although not by any means the earliest, appears gradually to have become the most intimate. The Dean resided chiefly in his house at Twickenham, and an acquaintance

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* See the various satires against Tighe, entitled "Mad Mullinix and Timothy," "Tim and the Fables," "Tom and Dick," "Dick a Maggot," "Clad all in Brown," "Dick's Variety," &c., besides repeated mention of him under the title of Dick Fitz-Baker and Pistorides, epithets bestowed on Tighe because he was descended from a contractor who supplied Oliver Cromwell's army with bread.

† Of this the younger Sheridan has recorded a whimsical instance. The Dean had a mind to surprise the Doctor, on his next visit, with some improvements made at his own expense. Accordingly he had a canal cut of some extent, and at the end of it, by transplanting some young trees, formed an arbour, which he called *Stella's bower*, and surrounded some acres of land about it with a dry-stone wall, (for the country afforded no lime), the materials of which were taken from the ground, which was very stony. The Dean had given strict charge to all about him to keep this secret, in order to surprise the Doctor on his arrival; but he had in the meantime received intelligence of all that was going forward. On his coming to Quilca, the Dean took an early opportunity of walking with him carelessly toward this new scene. The Doctor seemed not to take the least notice of any alteration, and, with a most inflexible countenance, continued to talk of indifferent matters. "Confound your stupidity," said Swift in a rage, "why, you blockhead, don't you see the great improvements I have been making here?"—"Improvements! Mr. Dean; why, I see a long bog-hole out of which I suppose you have cut the turf; you have removed some of the young trees, I think, to a worse situation; as to taking the stones from the surface of the ground, I allow

which had begun in Queen Anne's reign, between the protected poet and the patron, gradually ripened into intimate and equal friendship. Their characters were in some respects opposite, but these very points of opposition were such as removed the possibility of rivalry.

Pope's character and habits were exclusively literary, with all the hopes, fears, and failings, which are attached to that feverish occupation,—a restless pursuit of poetical fame. Without domestic society, or near relations; separated by weak health and personal disadvantages from the gay; by fineness of mind and lettered indolence, from the busy part of mankind, surrounded only by a few friends, who valued these gifts in which he excelled, Pope's whole hopes, wishes, and fears, were centred in his literary reputation. To extend his fame, he laboured indirectly, as well as directly; and to defend it from the slightest attack, was his daily and nightly anxiety. Hence the restless impatience which that distinguished author displayed under the libels of dunces, whom he ought to have despised, and hence too the venomed severity with which he retorted their puny attacks. Swift also was irritable and satirical, but from different causes. He never assumed, and probably disdained the character of a mere man of letters, whose sufferings or enjoyments depended upon the public reception of his works. His writings he only valued in so far as they accomplished the purpose for which they were written, and was so far from seeking the reputation which they might have attracted to the author, that he almost in every instance sent them into the world without his name. Hence he felt no jealousy of contemporary authors, and was indifferent to the criticism with which his treatises were assailed, unless in so far as it affected the argument which they were designed to support. Bred under Temple, the favourite of Oxford,

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that is a useful work, as the grass will grow the better for it; and placing them about the field in that form, will make it more easy to carry them off."—"Plague on your Irish taste," says Swift; "this is just what I ought to have expected from you; but neither you nor your forefathers ever made such an improvement; nor will you be able, while you live, to do anything like it."

The Doctor was resolved to retaliate on the Dean the first opportunity. It happened when he was down there in one of his vacations, that the Dean was absent for a few days on a visit elsewhere. He took this opportunity of employing a great number of hands to make an island in the middle of the lake, where the water was twenty feet deep; an arduous work in appearance, but not hard to be executed in a place abounding with large stones upon the surface of the ground, and where long heath grew everywhere in great plenty; for by placing quantities of those stones in large bundles of heath, the space was soon filled up, and a large island formed. To cover this, a sufficient quantity of earth and green sods were brought, and several well-grown osiers, and other aquatics, were removed to it. The Doctor's secret was better kept than Swift's; who, on his return, walked toward the lake, and seeing the new island, cried out in astonishment, "Heigh! how the water of the lake is sunk in this short time to discover that island of which there was no trace before!"—"Greatly sunk indeed," observed the Doctor with a sneer, "if it covered the tops of those osiers." Swift then saw he had been fairly taken in, and acknowledged the Doctor had got the better of him, both in his stratagem, and the beauty of his improvement.

and now the patriotic champion of Ireland, his hopes and fears were for the political interests which he espoused; his love was for party-friends, and his hatred and vengeance for political opponents. His feelings were those of a statesman, not of an author, and had been exalted from the cause of a party, to be fixed upon the liberties of a nation. The pecuniary emoluments of literature Swift seems never to have coveted, and therefore readily abandoned to Pope the care of selecting and arranging their fugitive pieces into three volumes of "Miscellanies," as well as the profit which might arise from the publication. He himself was engaged in matters of more momentous importance.

We have observed, that Walpole, now the omnipotent prime-minister, had violently assaulted Swift in the House of Commons, during the ministry of Oxford. Of this the Dean retained no vindictive recollection; for, during the whole controversy about Wood's project, he treated the character of Walpole with considerable respect: and now, upon arriving in London, after having dined with Sir Robert, upon invitation, he obtained an interview with him upon business, for the purpose of representing to him the distressed state of Ireland. The interview was granted through the mediation of the celebrated Earl of Peterborow, and took place on 27th April, 1726. The Dean stated at length the grievances of Ireland, being all that could contribute to render a nation poor and despicable: the nation being controlled by laws, to which her legislature did not consent; their manufactures interdicted to favour those of England; their trade cramped and ruined by prohibitions; the natives studiously excluded from all places of honour, trust, or profit; while the conduct of those to whom the government was delegated, lay under no other check than might arise from their own sense of justice. But Walpole was prepossessed against any statement of the affairs of Ireland that might come from Swift. Ere the Dean had left that kingdom, the primate Boulter, to whom Walpole chiefly confided the efficient power in Irish affairs, had written to the English minister in the following terms: "The general report is, that Dean Swift designs for England in a little time; and we do not question his endeavours to misrepresent his Majesty's friends here, wherever he finds an opportunity: but he is so well known, as well as the disturbances he has been the fomenter of in this kingdom, that we are under no fear of his being able to disserve any of his Majesty's faithful servants, by anything that is known to come from him: but we could wish some eye were had to what he shall be attempting on your side of the water." Thus prepossessed against all that might come from the author of the "Drapier's Letters," Walpole turned a deaf ear to the grievances of Ireland; and complaining that the king derived little revenue from that kingdom, proceeded to enlarge upon the opinions which he had adopted from its governors, in a manner which Swift deemed inconsistent with the notions of liberty, which Britons have ever considered as the inheritance of a human creature. The minister and patriot

parted on terms of mutual civility, but without having made the least impression upon each other's opinions. Swift, on the following morning, wrote the substance of their conference in a letter to Lord Peterborow, requesting his lordship to put it into the hands of Sir Robert Walpole. It need scarce be remarked, that the most brazen effrontery would not have ventured in such a letter, to be so communicated, to conceal or misrepresent what had passed between them; and that the account so given, and never contradicted, must contain the genuine record of this remarkable conversation.

An unworthy use was made of this interview, and of Swift's having accepted the previous invitation of Walpole; as if he had meant to barter his principles, and offer the minister the support of his pen, on condition of his being preferred in England. This charge requires a short investigation; for it was countenanced, to a certain extent, by Walpole, and zealously promulgated by his partizans. Had such an offer been made, it must have been worse than folly in Walpole to refuse the assistance of Swift, while he was expending very large sums to reward the political treatises of Arnal and Henley; so that, considering the well-known sagacity of the minister, as well as his unscrupulous mode of charming opposition to silence, by the ready mode of corrupt influence, we may conclude, that the offer not being accepted proves that it never was made. It is certain, indeed, that Swift would willingly have received from Walpole an opportunity of exchanging, and even at considerable disadvantage, his Irish deanery for some English living, which might have provided for his usual expenditure, and placed him for life in England. But this was uniformly opposed by the prime-minister, not because he disdained to purchase the support of Swift's pen, but because he had little hopes of laying him under such a weight of obligation, as might have prevented the risk of its being employed to his prejudice. Swift had declared, he was neither offered, nor would have received preferment, excepting on such conditions as would never be given to him. This is perfectly consistent with his desire to exchange the Deanery of St. Patrick's for an English living; a transaction which might have been arranged on terms of such advantage to his successor as should lay Swift under no obligation, and leave his political conduct free and unfettered. If he would not accept of a bishopric but on his own terms, he could be hardly disposed to barter his independence, merely to be translated to a worse living in England, than he already possessed in the sister country. And admitting that Walpole retained no memory of former quarrels, he might have believed it by no means his interest to bring Swift to England, unless upon such terms as would have made him entirely his own. Bolingbroke and Pulteney gave him enough of disturbance, without their forces being augmented by the keenest satirical writer of the age, whose friendships and principles were likely to engage him against the ministers of George I. Walpole, however, might have acted more wisely, by at once, and generously, doing what must have gratified Swift, and trusting to his sense of justice and

honour. It is certain, that Pulteney's civilities had as yet failed to engage the Dean in the politics of England; and in Swift's reply to the advice which Pope delicately insinuates, deprecating his involving himself in party disputes, and exhorting him to write only for truth, honour, and posterity, he seems to acquiesce in its propriety. But ancient friendship for Bolingbroke, and new causes of resentment against Walpole, combined to effect a change of his resolution.

Notwithstanding the coldness of the premier, Swift might hope to accomplish the desired change of residence by means of patronage more illustrious, though, in reality, less efficient than that of Walpole. The Prince of Wales, afterwards George II., and his consort, the princess, now kept a sort of court at Leicester House, and were endeavouring to form an interest separate from that of the king and his minister. For this purpose they courted such Whigs as were discontented with the court, and bestowed countenance, and indulgence even, upon the dejected Tories. The princess had also a taste for literature, which she indulged by summoning around her men of genius and learning, whose society the prince endured at least, though he was far from enjoying it. Pope, Gay, and Arbuthnot, were frequent and assiduous attendants on this little court. Their immediate protectress, however, was not the princess, but rather the celebrated Mrs. Howard; who filled the twofold situation of confidante of Caroline and mistress to the prince. It would seem, that, possessed of this double claim to favour, her interest could only be limited by the power of her friend and of her lover. But this was far from being the case. The princess, indulgent to her husband's gallantries, was jealous, to a great degree, of any one possessing political influence over him; and managed to retain her power so absolutely, that all who attempted to attain preferment through the favour of Mrs. Howard were certain to be thwarted in their hopes. Pope's religion was a bar to his forming any hopes by attendance on the prince's court; nor does Arbuthnot appear to have had any views of preferment. But both were anxious to promote the interest of Gay; and unfortunately, instead of trusting to the influence of the princess, who had expressed her resolution to patronize him, they took the contraband course, by applying all their court and flattery to Mrs. Howard. At this juncture, Dean Swift arrived in England; and as the princess was easily rendered curious to see so remarkable a person, she laid her commands upon him to attend her, which were nine times repeated before he complied with them. When presented to her, he said, (in allusion to the savage lately caught in Hanover,) "he understood her royal highness loved oddities; and that, having lately seen a wild boy from Germany, she was now desirous to see a wild dean from Ireland." The freedom of the address was well received; and the dean was honoured with so much of the princess's notice, as might well have authorized more ambitious prospects, upon the prince's succession to the crown, than Swift ever appears to have entertained. His visits at Leicester House were regular, and always well received. His residence with Pope, at

Twickenham, was also favourable to his paying his court when the princess resided at Richmond Hill, in the vicinity. The rest of his time was given to Lord Bolingbroke, at Dawley; a circumstance which, of itself, must have excited in Walpole dislike and suspicion.

Swift's visit to England was shortened, in the month of July, 1726, by the accounts of Mrs. Johnson's rapid decline. His letters on this melancholy subject, are a true picture of an agonized heart. Yet even the approaching calamity did not prevent his clinging to his peculiar system; and, in a letter to Dr. Stopford, he labours to impress on his correspondent, that the agony which he felt at parting with Stella, was that of friendship, not of love. He mentions her, as "*one* of the *two* oldest and dearest friends" he had in the world, and only distinguishes her from her gossiping and common-place companion Mrs. Dingley, as "the younger of the two." And concludes by conjuring Stopford to believe "that violent friendship is much more lasting, and as engaging as violent love." His letter to Sheridan contains more deep and unrestrained expressions of anguish: "The account you give me is nothing but what I have for some time expected with the utmost agonies—I look upon this to be the greatest event that can ever happen to me; but all my preparations will not suffice to make me bear it like a philosopher, nor altogether like a Christian. Judge in what a temper of mind I write this. The very time I am writing, I conclude the fairest soul in the world hath left its body. I have been long weary of the world, and shall, for my small remainder of days, be weary of life, having for ever lost that conversation which could only make it tolerable." He betrays the utmost horror at the idea of being in Ireland, when this beloved friend should breathe her last, and conscious, perhaps, of the incipient disorder of his mind, conjures his correspondents to apprize him of the state of her malady, did it seem to infer immediate danger of dissolution, that he might be saved the risk of such a trial.

On his arrival in Ireland, Swift was received with all the honours which the Drapier had earned for the Dean. Bells were rung, bonfires kindled, and a body of the most respectable citizens escorted their patriot in a sort of triumphal procession from the shore to the Deanery. But he was yet more gratified by finding that Mrs. Johnson was in part recovered, to ease at least, and immediate safety, though not to health or strength. The blow he so much dreaded was suspended, though not averted.

The celebrated "Travels of Gulliver" were now given to the world, but under the mystery which almost always shadowed Swift's publications. Swift left England in the month of August, and about the same time Motte the bookseller received the manuscript, dropped, he said, at his house in the dark, from a hackney coach.* It appeared in the November following, with several retrenchments and alterations,

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* Charles Ford, formerly employed in the negotiation with Barber, about the "Free Thoughts," rendered this second piece of secret service to the Dean.

owing to the timidity of the printer, of which Swift complains heavily in his correspondence, and which he endeavours to correct by the letter from Gulliver to his cousin Sympson, prefixed to the subsequent editions. But the public discovered no tameness in this extraordinary satirical romance, which produced a universal sensation, being read from the highest to the lowest, and from the cabinet-council to the nursery. The world was frantic to discover the author, and even his friends, Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, and others, wrote to Swift as if they were in doubt on the subject. But though they make use of expressions so strong, as to deceive some of his biographers into an opinion, that they were really in the uncertainty which they express, there is yet no doubt that all his literary brotherhood were more or less acquainted with the work before it was published.* Their reserve was either affected to humour Swift's wish of remaining concealed, or, perhaps, in case of the work giving offence, to avoid furnishing the evidence against the author, which might have arisen from an intercepted letter.

Perhaps no work ever exhibited such general attractions to all classes as these celebrated "Travels." It offered personal and political satire to the readers in high life, low and coarse incident to the vulgar, marvels to the romantic, wit to the young and lively, lessons of morality and policy to the grave, and maxims of deep and bitter misanthropy to neglected age, and disappointed ambition. The plan of the satire varies in the different parts. The Voyage to Lilliput refers chiefly to the court and politics of England, and Sir Robert Walpole is plainly intimated under the character of the Premier Flimnap,† which he afterwards probably remembered to the prejudice of the Dean's view of leaving Ireland. The factions of High-Heels and Low-Heels express the factions of Tories and Whigs, the Small-Endians and Big-Endians the religious divisions of Papist and Pro-

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* Swift, so early as 29th September, 1725, mentions to Pope, his being employed in correcting and arranging for publication his "Travels," in four parts. Arbuthnot mentions it in his letter of 17th October. It is scarce possible, that the scheme thus announced, should not have been canvassed, and the manuscript revised, during the fraternal meetings at Twickenham and Dawley. In evidence that it was so, we find Lord Bolingbroke on 23rd July, three months before the "Travels" appeared, addressing Swift, Pope, and Gay, as the three *Yahoos* of Twickenham, a jest which could not have been used by his lordship, and would have been unintelligible to two of the triumvirate he addressed, if "Gulliver's Travels" had not been known to them all. Besides, Arbuthnot, immediately on the publication, writes to Swift as the author. "I will make over all my profits to you for the property of 'Gulliver's Travels,' which I believe will have as great a run as John Bunyan." Pope alludes to it as what Swift called his "cousin's wonderful book," ("Gulliver's Travels," it will be remembered, were sent forth by his cousin Sympson), and mentions, though in guarded terms, his having gone to London, expressly to see how the work was received.

† The Lilliputian treasurer's fall from the tight rope, which was broken by one of the king's cushions, seems to intimate Walpole's resignation in 1717, when he was supposed to be saved from utter disgrace, by the interest of the Duchess of Kendal. The ridicule thrown upon the orders of knighthood by the Lilliputian

testant; and when the heir-apparent was described as wearing one heel high and one low, the Prince of Wales, who at that time divided his favour between the two leading political parties of England, laughed very heartily at the comparison. Blefescu is France, and the ingratitude of the Lilliputian court, which forces Gulliver to take shelter there, rather than have his eyes put out, is an indirect reproach upon that of England, and a vindication of the flight of Ormond and Bolingbroke to Paris.* Many other allusions may be traced by those well acquainted with the secret history of the reign of George I. The scandal which Gulliver gave to the empress, by his mode of extinguishing the flames in the royal palace, seems to intimate the author's own disgrace with Queen Anne, founded upon the indecorum of the "Tale of a Tub," which was remembered against him as a crime, while the service which he had rendered the cause of the high church was forgotten. It must also be remarked, that the original institutions of the empire of Lilliput are highly commended, as also their system of public education, while it is intimated, that all the corruptions of the court had been introduced during the three last reigns. This was Swift's opinion concerning the English constitution.

In the voyage to Brobdingnag the satire is of a more general character; nor is it easy to trace any particular reference to the political events or statesmen of the period. It merely exhibits human actions and sentiments as they might appear in the apprehension of beings of immense strength, and, at the same time, of a cold, reflecting, and philosophical character. The monarch of these sons of Anak is designed to embody Swift's ideas of a patriot king, indifferent to what was curious, and cold to what was beautiful, feeling only interest in that which was connected with general utility and the public weal. To such a prince, the intrigues, scandals, and stratagems, of an European court, are represented as equally odious in their origin, and contemptible in their progress. A very happy effect was also produced by turning the telescope, and painting Gulliver, who had formerly been a giant among the Lilliputians, as a pigmy amidst this tremendous race. The same ideas are often to be traced, but, as they are reversed in the part which is performed by the narrator, they are rather illustrated than repeated. Some passages of the court of Brobdingnag

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nobles leaping over a stick, for the decorations of the blue, red, and green threads, is principally aimed at Walpole, who, to enlarge this class of honours and rewards, revived the order of the Bath, as a preliminary step to that of the Garter. Upon that occasion, the Dean wrote some lines, now published for the first time, which conclude with the very idea more fully brought out in the travels to Lilliput:

> And he who'll leap over a stick for the king,
> Is qualified best for a dog in a string.

* In corroboration, it may be observed, that Gulliver's crime, as well as that imputed to Bolingbroke, was having made a peace, when it was possible entirely to have crushed a vanquished enemy.

were supposed to be intended as an affront upon the maids of honour, for whom, Delany informs us, that Swift had very little respect.*

The Voyage to Laputa was disliked by Arbuthnot, who was a man of science, and probably considered it as a ridicule upon the Royal Society; nor can it be denied, that there are some allusions to the most respectable philosophers of the period. An occasional shaft is even said to have been levelled at Sir Isaac Newton. The ardent patriot had not forgot the philosopher's opinion in favour of Wood's halfpence. Under the parable of the tailor, who computed Gulliver's altitude by a quadrant, and took his measure by a mathematical diagram, yet brought him his clothes very ill made and out of shape, by the mistake of a figure in the calculation, Swift is supposed to have alluded to an error of Sir Isaac's printer, who, by carelessly adding a cypher to the astronomer's computation of the distance between the sun and the earth, had increased it to an incalculable amount. Newton published, in the *Amsterdam Gazette*, a correction of this typographical error, but the circumstance did not escape the malicious acumen of the Dean of St. Patrick's. It was also believed by the Dean's friends that the office of flapper was suggested by the habitual absence of mind of the great philosopher. The Dean told Mr. D. Swift, that Sir Isaac was the worst companion in the world, and that, if you asked him a question, "he would revolve it in a circle in his brain, round, and round, and round, (here Swift described a circle on his own forehead,) before he could produce an answer."†

But, although Swift may have treated with irreverence the first philosopher of the age, and although it must be owned that he evinces, in many parts of his writings, an undue disrespect for mathematics,‡ yet the satire in Gulliver is rather aimed against the abuse of philosophical science than at its reality. The projectors in the academy of Laputa are described as pretenders, who had acquired a very slight tincture of real mathematical knowledge, and eked out their plans of mechanical improvement by dint of whim and fancy.

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* "I well remember his making strange reports of the phraseologies of persons about the court, and particularly the maids of honour, at the time of that visit" [to England].—"Delany's Remarks." The letters of the beautiful and lively Miss Bellenden, published in the "Suffolk Papers," certainly vindicated the Dean's censure.

† The Dean used also to tell of Sir Isaac, that his servant having called him one day to dinner, and returning, after waiting some time, to call him a second time, found him mounted on a ladder placed against the shelves of his library, a book in his left hand, and his head reclined upon his right, sunk in such a fit of abstraction, that he was obliged, after calling him once or twice, actually to jog him, before he could awake his attention. This was precisely the office of the flapper.

‡ Though Swift disliked mathematics, it was not for want of capacity for that science. He one day affirmed to Sheridan that it was an easy study; and, in consequence of a dispute with his friend upon that subject, Sheridan gave him a problem to solve. He desired Sheridan to leave the room; and in about half an hour the Dean called out to him, *heureka, heureka.* Sheridan assured Mrs. Whiteway that Swift had resolved the problem in the clearest manner, though he, who was himself a good mathematician, had chosen, on purpose, a very difficult one.

The age in which Swift lived had exhibited numerous instances of persons of this description, by whom many of the numerous *bubbles*, as they were emphatically termed, had been set on foot, to the impoverishment of credulous individuals, and the general detriment of the community. In ridiculing this class of projecters, whose character was divided between self-confidence in their own chimeras, and a wish to impose upon others, Swift, who peculiarly hated them,* has borrowed several illustrations, and perhaps the general idea, from "Rabelais," Book v. cap. xxiii., where Pantagruel inspects the occupations of the courtiers of Quinte-Essence, Queen of Entelechie.

The professors of speculative learning are represented as engaged in prosecution of what was then termed Natural and Mathematical Magic, studies not grounded upon sound principles, or traced out and ascertained by experiment, but hovering between science and mysticism. Such are the renowned pursuits of alchemy—the composition of brazen images that could speak; of wooden birds that could fly; of powders of sympathy, and salves, which were applied, not to the wound, but to the weapon by which it was inflicted; of vials of essence, which could manure acres of land, and all similar marvels, of which impostors propagated the fame, and which dupes believed to their cost. The machine of the worthy professor of Lagado, for improving speculative knowledge, and composing books on all subjects, without the least assistance from genius or knowledge, seems to be designed in ridicule of the art invented by Raimond Lully, and advanced by his sage commentators; the mechanical process, namely, by which, according to Cornelius Agrippa, (himself no mean follower of Lully,) "everye man might plentifullye dispute of what matter he wolde, and with a certain artificial and huge heap of nownes and verbes invente and dispute with ostentation, full of trifling deceites upon both sides."† A reader might have supposed himself transported to the grand academy of Lagado when he read of this "Brief and great art of invention and demonstration," which consisted in adjusting the subject to be treated of according to a machine composed of divers circles, fixed and moveable. The principal circle was fixed, and inscribed with the substances of all things that may be treated of, arranged under general heads, as GOD, ANGEL, EARTH, HEAVEN, MAN, ANIMAL, &c. Another circle was placed within it, which is moveable, bearing inscribed thereon what logicians call the accidents, as QUANTITY, QUALITY, RELATION, &c. Other circles again contained the predicates absolute and relative, &c., and the forms of the questions; and, by turning the circles, so as to bring the various attributes to bear upon the question proposed, there was effected a species of mechanical logic, which, it cannot be doubted, was in Swift's mind when he described the celebrated machine for making books. Various refinements upon

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* Recollecting, perhaps, the ruin of his uncle Godwin.

† Cornelius Agrippa of the Vanity of Sciences. Englished by Ja. San. Gent. London, 1575.

this mechanical mode of composition and ratiocination were contrived for the purpose of improving this Art of Arts, as it was termed. Kircher, the teacher of an hundred arts, modernized and refitted the machine of Lully. Knittel the Jesuit, composed, on the same system, his Royal Road to all sciences and arts; Brunus invented the art of logic on the same mechanical plan; and Kuhlman makes our very hair bristle, by announcing such a machine as should contain, not only the art of knowledge, comprehending a general system of all sciences, but the various arts of acquiring languages, of commentary, of criticism, of history, sacred and profane, of biography of every kind, not to mention a library of libraries, comprehending the essence of all the books that ever were written. When it was gravely announced by a learned author, in tolerable Latinity, that all this knowledge was to be acquired by the art of a mechanical instrument, much resembling a child's whirligig, it was time for the satirist to assume the pen. It was not real science, therefore, which Swift attacked, but those chimerical and spurious studies with which the name has been sometimes disgraced. In the department of the political projectors, we have some glances of his Tory feelings; and when we read the melancholy account of the Struldbrugs, we are affectingly reminded of the author's contempt of life,* and the miserable state in which his own was at length prolonged.

The Voyage to the Land of the Houyhnhnms is a composition an editor of Swift must ever consider with pain. The source of such a diatribe against human nature could only be, that fierce indignation which he has described in his epitaph as so long gnawing his heart. Dwelling in a land where he considered the human race as divided between petty tyrants and oppressed slaves, and being himself a worshipper of that freedom and independence which he beheld daily trampled upon, the unrestrained violence of his feelings drove him to loathe the very species by whom such iniquity was done and suffered. To this must be added, his personal health, broken and worn down by the recurring attacks of a frightful disorder: his social comfort destroyed by the death of one beloved object, and the daily decay and peril of another; his life decayed into autumn, and its remainder, after so many flattering and ambitious prospects, condemned to a country which he disliked, and banished from that in which he had formed his hopes, and left his friendships; when all these considerations are combined, they form some excuse for that general misanthropy which never prevented a single deed of individual benevolence. Such apologies are personal to the author, but there are also excuses for the work itself. The picture of the Yahoos, utterly odious and hateful as

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* For many years he used to bid his friends adieu with these melancholy words, "God bless you, I hope we shall never meet again." Upon one occasion, when he and another clergyman had just removed from beneath a large and heavy mirror, the cords which supported it suddenly gave way and it fell with great violence. The clergyman burst forth into an exclamation of thankfulness for their narrow escape. "Had I been alone," said Swift, "I could have wished I had not removed."

it is, presents to the reader a moral use. It was never designed as a representation of mankind in the state to which religion, and even the lights of nature, encourage men to aspire, but of that to which our species is degraded by the wilful subservience of mental qualities to animal instincts, of man, such as he may be found in the degraded ranks of every society, when brutalized by ignorance and gross vice. In this view, the more coarse and disgusting the picture, the more impressive is the moral to be derived from it, since, in proportion as an individual indulges in sensuality, cruelty, or avarice, he approaches in resemblance to the detested Yahoo.

It cannot, however, be denied, that even a moral purpose will not justify the nakedness with which Swift has sketched this horrible outline of mankind degraded to a bestial state: since a moralist ought to hold, with the Romans, that crimes of atrocity should be exposed when punished, but those of flagitious impurity concealed. In point of probability, too, for there are degrees of probability proper even to the wildest fiction, the fourth part of Gulliver is inferior to the three others. Giants and pigmies the reader can conceive; for, not to mention their being the ordinary machinery of romance, we are accustomed to see, in the inferior orders of creation, a disproportion of size between those of the same generic description, which may parallel (among some reptile tribes at least) even the fiction of Gulliver. But the mind rejects, as utterly impossible, the supposition of a nation of horses placed in houses which they could not build, fed with corn which they could neither sow, reap, nor save, possessing cows which they could not milk, depositing that milk in vessels which they could not make, and, in short, performing an hundred purposes of rational and social life, for which their external structure altogether unfits them.

But under every objection, whether founded in reason or prejudice, the "Travels of Gulliver" were received with the most universal interest, merited indeed by their novelty, as well as their internal merit. Lucian, Rabelais, More, Bergerac, Alletz, and many other authors, had indeed composed works, in which may be traced such general resemblance as arises from the imaginary voyage of a supposed traveller to ideal realms. But every Utopia which had hitherto been devised, was upon a plan either extravagant from its puerile fictions, or dull from the speculative legislation of which the story was made the vehicle. It was reserved for Swift to enliven the morality of his work with humour; to relieve its absurdity with satire; and to give the most improbable events an appearance of reality, derived from the character and style of the narrator. Even Robinson Crusoe (though detailing events so much more probable) hardly excels Gulliver in gravity and verisimilitude of narrative. The character of the imaginary traveller is exactly that of Dampier, or any other sturdy nautical wanderer of the period, endowed with courage and common sense, who sailed through distant seas, without losing a single English prejudice which he had brought from Portsmouth or Plymouth, and on his return gave a grave and simple narrative of what he had seen or heard in foreign countries.

The character is strictly English, and can be hardly relished by a foreigner.* The reflections and observations of Gulliver are never more refined or deeper than might be expected from a plain master of a merchant-man, or surgeon in the Old Jewry; and there was such a reality given to his whole person, that one seaman is said to have sworn he knew Captain Gulliver very well, but he lived at Wapping, not at Rotherhithe. It is the contrast between the natural ease and simplicity of such a style and the marvels which the volume contains, that forms one great charm of this memorable satire on the imperfections, follies, and vices of mankind. The exact calculations preserved in the first and second part, have also the effect of qualifying the extravagance of the fable. It is said that in natural objects, where proportion is exactly preserved, the marvellous, whether the object be gigantic or diminutive, is lessened in the eyes of the spectator, and it is certain, in general, that proportion forms an essential attribute of truth, and consequently of verisimilitude, or that which renders a narration probable. If the reader is disposed to grant the traveller his postulates as to the existence of the strange people whom he visits, it would be difficult to detect any inconsistence in his narrative. On the contrary, it would seem that Gulliver and they conduct themselves towards each other precisely as must necessarily have happened in the respective circumstances which the author has supposed. In this point of view, perhaps the highest praise that could have been bestowed on "Gulliver's Travels" was the censure of a learned Irish prelate, who said the book contained *some* things which he could not prevail upon himself to believe. It is a remarkable point of the author's art, that, in Lilliput and Brobdingnag, Gulliver seems gradually, from the influence of the images by which he was surrounded, to lose his own ideas of comparative size, and to adopt those of the pigmies and giants by whom he was surrounded. And, without farther prolonging these reflections, I would only request the reader to notice the infinite art with which human actions are divided between these two opposite races of ideal beings, so as to enhance the keenness of the satire. In Lilliput political intrigue and *tracasserie*, the chief employment of the highest ranks in Europe, are ridiculed by being transferred to a court of creatures about six inches high. But in Brobdingnag, female levities, and the lighter follies of a court, are rendered monstrous and disgusting, by being attributed to a race of such tremendous stature. By these and a thousand masterly touches of which we feel the effect, though we cannot trace the cause without a long analysis, the genius of Swift converted the sketch of an extravagant fairy tale into a narrative, unequalled for the skill with which

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* The French translator accordingly thought it necessary to enliven so dull a narrative, by some of the flippant brilliancy of a French writer of memoirs. The French received the work at first but indifferently; but it became very popular when its humour was better understood. So the Abbé Borleau informed Spence.

it is sustained, and the genuine spirit of satire of which it is made the vehicle.*

The renown of Gulliver's Travels soon extended into other kingdoms. Voltaire, who was at this time in England, spread their fame among his correspondents in France, and recommended a translation. The Abbé Desfontaines undertook the task, but with so many doubts, apprehensions, and apologies, as make his introduction a curious picture of the mind and opinions of a French man of letters. He admits, that he was conscious of offending against rules; and, while he modestly craves some mercy for the prodigious fictions which he had undertaken to clothe in the French language, he confesses, that there were passages at which his pen escaped his hand, from actual horror and astonishment at the daring violations of all critical decorum: then he becomes alarmed, lest some of Swift's political satire might be applied to the Court of Versailles, and protests, with much circumlocution, that it only concerns the *Toriz* and *Wigts*, as he is pleased to term them, of the factious kingdom of Britain. Lastly, he assures his readers, that not only has he changed many of the incidents, to accommodate them to the French taste, but, moreover, they will not be annoyed, in this translation, with the nautical details, and minute particulars so offensive in the original. Notwithstanding all this affectation of superior taste and refinement, the French translation is very tolerable. It is true, the Abbé Desfontaines indemnified himself and the French public, by writing a continuation of the Travels, in a style, as may easily be conceived, very different from that of the original.† Another continuation (a pretended third volume) was published in England, the most impudent combination of piracy and forgery that ever occurred in the literary world; for while the book was affirmed to be written by the author of the genuine Gulliver, it was not even the work of his imitator, being almost entirely stolen

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* At a late period of Swift's life, he undertook a revision of "Gulliver's Travels," and made some bitter additions wherever the law or its professors are mentioned. The volume bearing these corrections, passed from the possession of Mr. Theophilus Swift into that of the Bishop of Ossory; but it is said that all or most of the alterations have been transferred to the later editions, so that it is now matter of curiosity alone.

† Desfontaines' continuation is entitled "Le Nouveau Gulliver," being the Travels of John, the son of the celebrated Captain Lemuel Gulliver. They have no more relation to the original, than the Telemaque of Fenelon has to the Odyssey. He has avoided the bold and irregular fictions, the hardy and satirical morality, the natural and minute narrative of Swift. Jean Gulliver is merely an uninteresting *voyageur imaginaire*, who travels into one country, where the females were the ruling sex; into another, where the life of the inhabitants was ephemeral; into a third, where ugliness was the subject of desire and admiration. Though sinking far below the originality and spirit of his model, Desfontaines' work displays some fancy and talent. The author long conducted the "Journal des Savans," and was engaged in some controversies with Voltaire, which did little honour to either party. The Abbé Desfontaines died in 1745.

from an obscure French work, called "L'Histoire des Severambes."* Besides these continuations, a work thus completely successful failed not to be attended by imitations, parodies, keys, verses commendatory and defamatory, and the whole accompaniments of a popular triumph, not forgetting a slave in the chariot, whose abuse and ribaldry might remind the exulting author he was still a man.

The publication of the Travels, as giving fresh and additional notoriety to the author, served to increase his favour at Leicester House. Many pieces of mutual politeness were exchanged, and much raillery on the subject of Gulliver, the Yahoos, and the Lilliputians. At leaving England, Swift had requested from the princess and Mrs. Howard, a trifling present, taxing the former at ten pounds, and the latter at one guinea, as a memorial of the distinction which they seemed to place between him and an ordinary clergyman. The princess promised a present of medals, which was never fulfilled. Mrs. Howard, more true of promise, sent Swift a ring and a letter, which he answered by a letter in the character of Gulliver, accompanied with a golden trinket in the shape of a crown, to represent the diadem of Lilliput.† The princess condescended to accept from the Dean a piece of Irish silk for her own wearing, a point of obligation to which his correspondence recurs rather too frequently after their breach. Everything seemed to intimate, that, in case of the prince's succession to the crown, Gulliver (to use the words of Peterborow) had but to chalk his pumps, and learn to dance on the tight rope, and he might yet be a bishop.

While the Travels were printing in silence and mystery, Pope was busied with the projected Miscellanies. Nothing could exceed the generous and good-humoured frankness with which Swift abandoned his verses to his friend's criticism, entreating him to correct, to burn, and to blot, without favour. He showed himself as tractable in his years of full-blown fame, as when in his younger years, at the instance of Addison, he erased forty verses, added forty verses, and altered a like number, in the short poem of Baucis and Philemon. In the middle of March, the Miscellany was published, with the cipher of the two friends combined on the title-page, and Pope rejoiced in the joint volumes in which they were to walk hand in hand down to posterity.

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* The THIRD VOLUME of Gulliver's Travels was published by this unblushing forger so early as 1727, without a printer's name. It is executed in the same form with the genuine work, but is a mere bookseller's catch-penny. The author sends Gulliver on a second voyage to Brobdingnag, but, soon tiring of the task of original composition, however little genius was expended in it, he fills the remainder of the volume with the unacknowledged plunder of a French *Voyage Imaginaire*, entitled, "Histoire des Severambes," which, in the work entitled "Melanges tirés d'une grande Bibliotheque," is ascribed to Monsieur Alletz. The work was suppressed in France, and other Catholic kingdoms, on account of the deistical opinions which it expressed, and being therefore of rare occurrence, offered facilities for the barefaced plagiarism and forgery of the author of the third volume of Gulliver.

† This toy is still preserved by Mrs. Howard's representatives.

He had also reason to congratulate himself in point of emolument, for the sale was so rapid, that the two first volumes were speedily followed by a third, and the profit, of which the Dean resigned the whole to him, was considerable.* A yet more important donation was the copyright of Gulliver, which Pope sold for the sum of three hundred pounds. The publication of the Miscellany had some less pleasing consequences. The treatise upon the Bathos, and the examples compiled from living poets, drew upon the allied authors a hailstorm of petty lampoons and libels from the aggrieved parties, under which Pope writhed, though Swift despised and overlooked them.

Stella had now apparently recovered a tolerable state of health, and. in the month of March, 1727, Swift visited England for the last time, His reception at Leicester House was as cordial as ever, but there were no traces of that apparent spirit of accommodation with which Walpole had formerly received him. The minister had, during the Dean's absence, gone so far as to express to Pope his desire of having seen Swift again before he left England, and his having observed a willingness in him to live there. Upon this overture he probably expected something to have been proposed or asked by the Dean. The hint, however, was not taken: and Walpole's communication on the subject with Pope plainly shows the absurdity of the allegation, that Swift had offered his services, and that these services had been rejected. On the contrary, it is evident that the Dean, however desirous of being removed to England, was so far from stooping to solicit it as a favour, that he did not even seek another interview with Walpole, though it was indirectly offered, for the sake of stating his wishes more plainly. Walpole, offended by his indifference, little gratified, probably, by the hints in the "Travels to Lilliput," now broke off all communication. Perhaps, also, he considered Swift as privately caballing with Pulteney and Bolingbroke, perhaps having found the road to the prince's good graces, through the interest of the princess, he chose to keep no measures with the little band of literary friends who had attached themselves to Mrs. Howard. Swift had previously intimated, that, if he was not better treated by the minister this year than the last, he would take vengeance; and accordingly, within a few weeks after his arrival in England, we find him engaged in a paper to be sent to the "Craftsman," the general channel for assault upon Walpole. In this epistle, which was never finished, he touches upon "the grievous mistake, in a great minister, to neglect or despise, much more to irritate men of genius and learning," which was probably his own immediate cause of resentment. About this time, too, Swift is supposed to have supplied Gay with the two celebrated songs, after ingrafted in the "Beggar's Opera," beginning, "Through all the employments of life," and, "Since laws were made for every degree." Warton has assigned both to Pope, but the internal evidence is in favour of Mr. Dean Swift

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* Amounting at least to one hundred and fifty pounds.

and Mrs. Whiteway, who uniformly declared they were written by the Dean.*

After a summer spent among the friends of his best days, Swift began to resume his intention of passing the winter in a milder climate, as it was supposed the air of the south of France might mitigate the distressing symptoms of his recurring disorder. The king's death, and the probable dismissal of Walpole from office, interrupted his purpose, and lighted up, for the last time, those hopes of comfort at least, if not of ambition, which depended on his being settled in England. A change of ministry was generally expected. Swift, accustomed to disappointment, was less sanguine than others, and hesitated whether he should suspend his journey to the continent. Bolingbroke urged him to remain, and expressed his belief, that the opportunity of quitting England for Ireland was fairly before him. He remained, accordingly, kissed the hands of their majesties on their accession, and was received by the queen with her usual marks of favour. But Sir Robert Walpole, through the interest of Queen Caroline, triumphed over all his rivals, and on the 24th June was reinstated in the employments and confidence which he enjoyed under the former monarch. Still, however, it was supposed, that the secret influence of Mrs. Howard might serve her friends. Swift wrote to her requesting her advice concerning his intention of going abroad, and conjuring her to answer him with sincerity. Mrs. Howard replied, exhorting him not to leave England, as it would have an appearance of disaffection; and other friends seemed to have authority from her to hint, that his favourite object of an exchange into England might yet be practicable. Sir Robert Walpole's interest, and probably that of Queen Caroline, who in secret opposed all who sought favours at Court through the mediation of Mrs. Howard, rendered vain the expectations which were thus excited. Mrs. Howard afterwards vindicated herself, by stating, that if success did not justify her advice, she had at least given the reasons on which it was founded, so that Swift, having opportunity of judging for himself of its solidity, was the dupe of his own judgment, not of her falsehood. But the Dean seems to have felt that his dignity had suffered in thus lingering around the Court, waiting for a favour which his enemies had a malicious pleasure in withholding. His resentment rankled within him, and extended itself not only to Walpole and the queen, but to Mrs. Howard, who seems in reality to have wanted the power, not the inclination to serve him.

During this anxious interval, Swift was afflicted with a severe

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* Swift never saw the Beggar's Opera in a complete state until it was printed; but it does not follow that he contributed no songs. He is generally supposed to have given the hint of the subject, by suggesting to Gay to write a Newgate pastoral. While these three wits, indeed, held their meetings at Twickenham, it may be difficult to assign to each individual his share in a labour which they were all willing to further. Mrs. Whiteway said the Dean also suggested the Trivia, which is rendered very probable, since his habits of walking, and his verses on the City-Shower, showed him to be master both of the subject and manner.

paroxysm of his disorder, and about the same time received news from Ireland, that Stella was once more reduced to extremity. The agony with which these tidings affected him, induced him suddenly to leave Twickenham, where he was then residing, and shut himself up in lodgings in London, miserably afflicted both in body and mind.* He wrote to Sheridan and Worrall in the bitterest sorrow, anticipating the dissolution of "that person for whose sake only life was worth preserving." Yet with stubborn adherence to his determination of concealing their union, he conjures Worrall so to arrange, that her decease might not take place at the deanery, which Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Dingley always occupied in his absence. He had enemies, he said, who would interpret such an event injuriously to his character. When his health was a little restored, he departed for Ireland. He took by letter a civil leave of Mrs. Howard, and transmitted his duty to the queen. To Pope he wrote in the most affectionate terms. "If it pleases God," he said, "to restore me to my health, I shall readily make a third journey; if not, we must part as all human creatures have parted." Such, indeed, was the decree of Heaven, for these illustrious friends met no more. The Dean left the country so dearly beloved by him, for the last time, in the beginning of October, 1727.

When Swift arrived in Ireland, Stella was on the verge of the grave. For six months she had been only preserved by constant medical attendance and support. In this languishing state she had a remarkable conversation with Swift upon the subject of declaring their marriage, which has been interpreted in a manner highly prejudicial to the character of the latter, as if he had been guilty of the most sullen cruelty towards the friend whose decay cost him such daily agony, and for whose spiritual consolation he composed the most beautiful and affecting devotional exercises. I give it with every circumstance, as nearly as possible, in the words of Mr. Theophilus Swift, to whom it was communicated by Mrs. Whiteway. "When Stella was in her last weak state, and one day had come in a chair to the deanery, she was with difficulty brought into the parlour. The Dean had prepared some mulled wine, and kept it by the fire for her refreshment. After tasting it, she became very faint, but, having recovered a little by degrees, when her breath (for she was asthmatic) was allowed her, she desired to lie down. She was carried up stairs, and laid on a bed; the Dean sitting by her, held her hand, and addressed her in the most affectionate manner. She drooped, however, very much. Mrs.

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* Dr. Johnson has given this circumstance a malevolent turn: "He left the house of Pope, as it seems, with very little ceremony, finding that two sick friends cannot live together, and did not write to him till he found himself at Chester." Sinking, as he himself declares, under weakness, age, and wounded affection, Swift might have claimed some exemption from ceremony. But Pope saw Swift at his lodgings in London, as he himself writes to Sheridan, more than once at least, and when the Dean left England, he took leave of Pope in a kind letter, not written from Chester, but left for him at Gay's lodgings, over which he to whom it was addressed, "wept like a girl."

28th January, 1727—8, about eight o'clock at night, Mrs. Johnson closed her weary pilgrimage, and passed to that land where they neither marry nor are given in marriage.

Swift was now in a manner alone in the world, afflicted by many of those varied calamities, with which to use his own words, the author of our being weans us gradually from our fondness of life, the nearer we approach the end of it. Disease and decay of nature—the death of many friends, and the estrangement or ingratitude of more—a want of relish for earthly enjoyments, with a general dislike for persons and things, daily increasing upon him—passions too readily irritable, and the keen sensation of remorse, after having extravagantly indulged them;—all these evils combined to darken his future prospect; and the gleams of cheerfulness and enjoyment which yet occasionally gilded his way, grew fewer and more languid as his path tended downwards, until he reached the sad point, beyond which all was second childishness and mere oblivion. There remained to him, indeed, the applause of the public, and the society of many sincere and respectful friends, in the land of which he was now unwillingly an inhabitant for life. But the former could give no balm for domestic affliction, and most of the latter had been so much accustomed to submit to his humour, and endure practical and personal jests, that either he was nettled by their resentment when he pushed their patience beyond endurance, or, while humoured to the very extremity of caprice, became sensible that excess of familiarity was followed by contempt, its usual consequence.* He was banished, in short, from Pope, Bolingbroke, Arbuthnot, and his original compeers, with whom he measured mind against mind, learned to respect himself in respecting them, and felt no other superiority than might arise from a momentary advantage in argument.

Ambition is often smothered when deprived of hope, but its restless ghost seldom fails to haunt those whom it has called vassals, and to excite them to animosity or vengeance, even after hope is no more. Swift, accordingly, after the death of Stella, seems first to have been roused by the sense of Walpole's enmity. It was greatly increased by the conduct of Queen Caroline and the minister towards Gay. The promise of her majesty's patronage could not decently be withdrawn from the poet, but, as if to mark her altered opinion, and even contempt,

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* The Dean was fond of pranks which bordered on childish sports. It will hardly be believed that he sometimes, by way of exercise, used to chase the Grattans, and other accommodating friends, through the large apartments of the deanery, and up and down stairs, driving them like horses, with his whip in his hand, till he had accomplished his usual quantity of exercise. I have heard there was an old gentleman, a Scot, or of Scottish extraction, settled in the north of Ireland, whom he used to teaze with some story of the dirt and poverty of his country, till the old man, between jest and earnest, started up with his cane uplifted, when Swift, in great seeming terror, would run away to hide himself. His practical jokes he sometimes pushed beyond even the patience of the good-natured Sheridan, and then was angry at him for not enduring what no man ought to have wished a friend to brook.

Whiteway was the only third person present. After a short time, her politeness induced her to withdraw to the adjoining room, but it was necessary, on account of air, that the door should not be closed: it was half-shut,—the rooms were close adjoining. Mrs. Whiteway had too much honour to listen, but could not avoid observing that the Dean and Mrs. Johnson conversed together in a low tone; the latter, indeed, was too weak to raise her voice. Mrs. Whiteway paid no attention, having no idle curiosity, but at length she heard the Dean say, in an audible voice, '*Well, my dear, if you wish it, it shall be owned,*' to which Stella answered, with a sigh, '*It is too late.*'" Such are, upon the best and most respectable authority, the minute particulars of this remarkable anecdote. The word *marriage* was not mentioned, but there can remain no doubt that such was the secret to be owned; and the report of Mrs. Whiteway I received with pleasure, as vindicating the Dean from the charge of cold-blooded and hard-hearted cruelty to the unfortunate Stella, when on the verge of existence.* On

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* Mr. Sheridan has related this anecdote in the following terms:

"A short time before her death, a scene passed between the Dean and her, an account of which I had from my father, and which I shall relate with reluctance, as it seems to bear more hard on Swift's humanity than any other part of his conduct in life. As she found her final dissolution approach, a few days before it happened, in the presence of Dr. Sheridan, she addressed Swift in the most earnest and pathetic terms to grant her dying request: 'That, as the ceremony of marriage had passed between them, though for sundry considerations they had not cohabited in that state, in order to put it out of the power of slander to be busy with her fame after death, she adjured him by their friendship to let her have the satisfaction of dying at least, though she had not lived, his acknowledged wife.'

"Swift made no reply, but, turning on his heel, walked silently out of the room, nor ever saw her afterward during the few days she lived. This behaviour threw Mrs. Johnson into unspeakable agonies, and for a time she sunk under the weight of so cruel a disappointment. But soon after, roused by indignation, she inveighed against his cruelty in the bitterest terms; and, sending for a lawyer, made her will, bequeathing her fortune by her own name to charitable uses. This was done in the presence of Dr. Sheridan, whom she appointed one of her executors."

It cannot be denied that there is here an anecdote told upon apparently good authority. But Mr. Theophilus Swift's authority seems still preferable. It was derived from Mrs. Whiteway after he attained the years of manhood, and Mr Sheridan was a boy at the time of his father's death; and although neither father nor son was capable of voluntarily propagating a falsehood to the Dean's prejudice yet it seems more likely that a boy might have mistaken what his father said to him on such a subject, than that Mr. Swift should have misunderstood a story told to him repeatedly and minutely by Mrs. Whiteway, after he had come to man's estate. In fact, the hardness of heart imputed to Swift, by the earlier edition of the story, is not only totally inconsistent with an affection agonized by the view of its dying object, but with every circumstance. Vanessa was dead,—Stella was dyng,—the Dean could no longer fear that the society or claims of a wife should be forced upon him,—the scene was closed, and every reason for mystery at an end. The relations may indeed be reconciled, by supposing that of Mrs. Whiteway subsequent to the scene detailed by Sheridan. The Dean may at length have relented, yet Sheridan remained ignorant of it. Dr. Johnson seems to have received the anecdote as given in the text.

he was named gentleman-usher to the Princess Louisa, then an infant. Gay, with proper spirit, refused the appointment, and, in the "Beggar's Opera," took a most ample satisfaction upon king, queen, and ministers. This marked affront to his friend opened Swift's eyes, if he yet hoped anything, either from the queen's favour, or the influence of Mrs. Howard.

In this humour he composed the celebrated "Rhapsody" (1733), in which the ironical praises which he bestowed on the monarch, queen, and royal family, were taken in such good part, that he assured Dr. King he received a message of thanks. "The 'Rhapsody,'" says the doctor, "might have continued to Swift the favour it had acquired him, if Lord Harvey had not undeceived Queen Caroline, and taken some pains to teach her the use and power of the irony." Although a friend to the Protestant succession, he had never regarded with much cordiality the family on which the crown was settled; and when there was a report that George I. intended to publish, or sue out a divorce against his unfortunate consort, and declare a marriage with the Duchess of Kendal, whom he is said to have married with the left hand, the Dean made the perplexity of the ministers the subject of the bitterest epigram which his own or any other pen ever traced.* The attentions of Caroline, when princess, had suspended a dislike which now returned with double bitterness. One of his modes of mortifying the royal family was, to cause a monument to be erected in the Cathedral of St. Patrick's, to the memory of the Duke of Schomberg, reflecting bitterly upon his descendants, who had declined being at this expense. The parties whom this inscription immediately affected, were the Earl of Holdernesse and Lord Fitzwalter; but it also touched upon the envoy of the King of Prussia, who, having married a granddaughter of Schomberg, made a formal complaint to George I. The king expressed himself much displeased, and said publicly in the drawing-room, "that the Dean of St. Patrick's had put up that monument out of malice, to make a quarrel betwixt his Majesty and the king of Prussia." Thus, an irreconcilable breach took place between Swift and the court, as well as the ministers. On Walpole Swift made war, both in verse and prose, nor did he spare even royalty itself, for the "Directions for making a Birth-day Song" are most bitter upon the whole family, especially on Queen Caroline.

While thus venting his resentment against the court, Swift continued to apply himself with great vigour to the national interests of Ireland, although so much dreaded and disliked by the government, that even his friend Carteret declined to admit him to any situation which could give him an official right of interference.† But the patriotism of

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* It was found among Swift's papers, with this characteristic jotting on the back.—"A wicked treasonable libel. I wish I knew the author, that I might hang him."

† He never could prevail upon Lord Carteret to nominate him one of the trustees of the linen manufactory, or even a justice of peace His lordship always replied

Swift was not to be damped by discouragement. In every varied form he endeavoured to make the people aware of their rights and interests,—the rulers of the impolicy, as well as cruelty, of their oppressive restrictions. The "View of the State of Ireland;" the "Story of an Injured Lady;" the "Letter to the Archbishop of Dublin concerning the Weavers;" the "Answer to Sir John Brown's Memorial," and many other Tracts, show his careful and unremitting attention to the rights and interests of Ireland, whether political, commercial, or agricultural.* But the inimitable piece of irony by which he proposes to relieve the distresses of the poor, by converting their children into food for the rich, has never been equalled in any age or country. The grave, formal, and business-like mode in which the calculations are given; the projector's protestation of absolute disinterest in the success of his plan; the economy with which he proposes the middling class should use this new species of food; and the magnificence which he attaches to the idea of a well-grown fat yearling child roasted whole for a lord mayor's feast; the style of a projector, and the terms of the shambles, so coolly and yet carefully preserved from beginning to end, render it one of the most extraordinary pieces of humour in our language. A foreign author was so much imposed upon by the gravity of the style, that he quoted it as an instance of the extreme distress of Ireland, which appeared to equal that of Jerusalem in its last siege, since a dignitary of the church was reduced to propose, as the only mode of alleviating the general misery, the horrid resource of feeding upon the children of the poor.

This repeated interference of Swift seems greatly to have annoyed the faction by which Ireland was then ruled, nor was their displeasure always silent. The mayor and corporation having resolved to present the Dean with the freedom of the city in a golden box, Joshua, Lord Allen, although he had at one time courted the Dean's friendship,

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"I am sure, Mr. Dean, you despise those feathers, and would not accept of them. The Dean answered, "No,' my lord, I do not, as I might be serviceable to the public in both capacities; but, as I would not be governed by your excellency, nor job at the board, or suffer abuses to pass there, or at a quarter-sessions' assizes, I know that you will not indulge me for the good of this unhappy nation: but if I were a worthless member of Parliament, or a bishop, would vote for the court, and betray my country, then you would readily grant my request." Lord Carteret replied, with equal freedom and politeness, "What you say is literally true, and therefore you must excuse me." The Dean, sometime afterwards, in company with Dr. Bolton, Archbishop of Cashel, Dr. Synge, Bishop of Elphin, and other trustees of the board, asked why they would not elect him trustee. The archbishop answered, "That he was too sharp a razor, and would cut them all." To which the Dean made no reply.—"Swiftiana."

* His most trifling bounties were qualified with a view to the interest of Ireland. Giving one day a guinea to the maid-servant of a friend, he charged her to buy a gown of Irish stuff with his bounty. Returning afterwards and finding her in the same dress, he accused her of neglecting his orders. She went out and returned with her apron filled with a set of the Dean's works. "This," she said, "please your reverence, is the Irish stuff I have bought, and better was never manufactured." Swift, as may be supposed, was highly gratified.

chose, in the council and House of Peers, to make a bitter invective against Swift, as a Tory, a Jacobite, and a libeller of the government; and publicly upbraided the mayor with wasting the money of the corporation in making presents to such a character. The Dean heard of this attack with the greater indignation, as, within a few hours after the invective had been pronounced, Lord Allen had sent a common friend to him with renewed protestations of regard. The mediator, finding other apologies ill received, at length said, touching his forehead, "You know, sir, our poor friend is a little disordered here at times."—"I know," answered the Dean, with great gravity, "that he is a madman; and, if that were all, no man living could commiserate his condition more than myself: but, sir, he is a madman possessed by the devil. I renounce him." Accordingly, he not only vindicated himself to the lord mayor and corporation on occasion of receiving the freedom and gold box, in terms the most peremptory, but also published, in an advertisement, a contradiction of Lord Allen's charge, as "insolent, false, scandalous, malicious, and, in a particular degree, perfidious." Upon the same occasion he composed and published the satire entitled Traulus, the first part of which is a dialogue turning upon the melancholy apology proposed for Allen by their common friend, Robert Leslie. And, on several other opportunities, the unfortunate peer was distinguished in the Dean's satirical productions.

In order to maintain this skirmishing warfare, the Dean and Sheridan, in 1728, commenced a periodical paper called the "Intelligencer." But the circulation being small, and the price of each number only a halfpenny, the printer could not afford to pay any young man of talent to act as editor, so that it was soon dropped. The Dean gives Pope an account of the papers which he wrote for the "Intelligencer," in whole or in part, being nine in all. No. II. contained a singular account of an affront offered to Swift by Colonel Abel Ram, member of Parliament for the borough of Gorey (called Squire Wether in the "Intelligencer"), whose carriage intercepted Swift and Sheridan rudely, as they were travelling on horseback. On this occasion, Swift, or more probably his companion, is said to have made this impromptu:—

Hear not, Britain, how Ireland's pride and glory,
Was butted in a slough by the Ram of Gorey.

Amid these disputes, Carteret, with the skill of a thorough-bred courtier, trimmed between the danger of offending the English ministry, or rather of furnishing them with an apology for displacing him, and that of breaking communication with Swift, whose influence as well as his talents were not a little to be dreaded, even if it had not been Carteret's object to preserve and strengthen his interest among the adversaries of Walpole, so far as it could be done with security and decency. He was distinguished by a readiness of wit, with which he could retort and parry even the attacks of Swift. And it is said, that, about the time when the proclamation was abroad against the Drapier's

fourth letter, the Dean visited the castle, and having waited for some time without seeing the lord-lieutenant, wrote upon one of the windows of the chamber of audience these lines :—

> My very good lord, 'tis a very hard task,
> For a man to wait here, who has nothing to ask.

Under which Carteret wrote the following happy reply :—

> My very good Dean, there are few who come here,
> But have something to ask, or something to fear.

On some such occasion, when Carteret had parried, with his usual dexterity, some complaint or request of Swift, he exclaimed, "What, in God's name, do you do here? Get back to your own country, and send us our boobies again!"

They appear uniformly to have understood each other. Carteret took no offence at the patriotic effusions of the Dean, however vehement, and Swift, without expecting that thorough change of measures respecting Ireland, which he knew it was not in Carteret's power to effect, was contented to exert his influence as occasion offered, to prevail on the lord-lieutenant to promote either his own personal friends, or persons whom he had political reasons for recommending. The Dean had, indeed, no longer those high ideas of Carteret's patriotism, which seem to have dictated the poem entitled "The Birth of Manly Virtue;" but, down to the period of his leaving Ireland, he continued to retain as much respect for him, as was consistent with his consenting to remain the involuntary instrument of a ministry whom he hated, and their nominal agent in measures which he secretly disapproved. And he acknowledged at the same time, with gratitude, the lord-lieutenant's attention to his recommendations. Carteret's complaisance on such occasions excited the loud complaints of Richard Tighe, and other violent Whigs, who, knowing by what a precarious tenure the lord-lieutenant held his situation, endeavoured to alarm him by an outcry that his favours were chiefly conferred upon those who were disaffected to government; on which occasion Swift, with his usual ironical gravity, wrote his Vindication of Lord Carteret from the charge of favouring none but Tories, High-churchmen and Jacobites, in which he ascribes the promotion of Sheridan (so speedily checked), and that of Delany, to the lieutenant's old-fashioned taste for classical literature, which, in these cases, had unfortunately prevailed over the more laudable quality of party zeal. In this treatise the demerits of Lord Allen and Tighe are exposed, as having been most active in exciting those clamours among the high-flown adherents of the ministry, or, as Swift entitles them, the hopers, pretenders, expecters, and professors, whose claim it was to engross all the favours of government. Besides his friendship for the lord-lieutenant himself, the Dean was upon the best terms with his lady, his mother-in-law Lady Worsley, and his whole family, as appears from his "Apology," addressed to Lady Carteret.

In the course of these three years, the Dean had some other literary encounters. One of his antagonists, Jonathan Smedley, Dean of Clogher, a man of indifferent character, a trader in the petty scandal of literature, a violent Whig withal, had published a tolerably complete collection of all the ribaldry which he could compose or rake together against Pope and Swift, under the title of "GULLIVERIANA, or a fourth volume to their Miscellany." This presumption not only procured him a prominent place in the "Dunciad," but, upon his coming to Ireland under the protection of the Duke of Grafton, and becoming Dean of Clogher, gained him the farther distinction of repeated notice in the Dean's satires. It was not unprovoked, for Smedley's "much malice" was "mingled with a little wit," and, like the abuse of all who care not what they say, his lampoons sometimes hit the mark. But what seems to have provoked the Dean more than personal libels, to which he was in general insensible, was, that Smedley affected to court Carteret's favour, in the "looser rhyme," with which "t'other Jonathan," as he familiarly termed Swift, used to propitiate Ormond and Oxford. A part of the Dean's displeasure even fell upon Delany, who, being a good deal about the person of the lord-lieutenant, and by no means so indifferent to his own interest as the thoughtless Sheridan, endeavoured, by poetical epistles, fables, &c., occasionally to awake his patron's benevolence. Swift, who despised what he called the trade of a "sweetener," unmoved by the occasional strokes of flattery to himself, interspersed through those pieces, rebuked Delany with considerable asperity for his assentation. The Doctor had given farther offence, by attacking the "Intelligencer," to which he was not aware that Swift was a contributor. This produced "Paddy's character of the Intelligencer," in which the assaults of Delany on Sheridan are compared to those of the wasp who pursued the eagle even to the bosom of Jupiter, and even there,

The spiteful insect stung the god.

But, from the address to Delany on the libels written against him, it is evident that, notwithstanding these satirical effusions, he retained a considerable place in the Dean's favour. Indeed, it was the influence of Delany, which indirectly, or perhaps directly, occasioned the final offence taken by Queen Caroline against Swift. To understand this, there must be produced on the stage three characters of a very subordinate and dubious description.

The Reverend Thomas Pilkington was introduced by Delany to Dean Swift's notice, and obtained a humble post in his cathedral. Having some vivacity of talents, though totally devoid of principle, he made himself agreeable by petty attentions and services; and, upon his expressing a wish to go to England, the Dean, who was ever anxious to reward kindness and to serve merit, or what seemed to be such, gave him warm recommendations to his old friend Barber, then Lord Mayor of London, who made Pilkington his chaplain. He also introduced him to Pope, Bolingbroke, and one or two other friends. But

they were soon disgusted by his impudence and undisguised profligacy, which produced from Bolingbroke, and even from Barber, an expostulation to Swift on the too great readiness with which he granted such recommendations. Pilkington's wife was a person of much the same description with himself, having some cleverness, much petulance, and a plentiful lack both of virtue and discretion. From her husband being for some time about the Dean's person, this gossiping dame picked up some knowledge of his peculiar habits, and some little anecdotes concerning him, which she afterwards represented as having all taken place in her own presence, with the addition of abundance of figments which had no foundation whatever.*

About the same time, and also by the recommendation of Dr. Delany, the Dean interested himself considerably in advancing a subscription for the poems of Mrs. Barber, the wife of a woollen-draper in Dublin. She was desirous of dedicating her book to Lord Orrery, and she prevailed upon the Dean to ask permission of his lordship to such effect, and Swift's letter to that purpose is printed as preliminary to her dedication. When this person went to England in 1731, to get her work printed, Swift appears to have recommended her to Dr. Arbuthnot, Gay, Lady Betty Germaine, Mrs. Cæsar, Mr. Barber the printer, and others, whom he thought likely to advance her interest. But an extraordinary circumstance occurred; for about this time Queen Caroline received three letters, with the Dean's signature, but written in a feigned hand, recommending to her in very haughty and unbecoming terms, an inquiry into the distresses of Ireland, and descending at once, from a warm and even violent exposition of national grievances, to the case of Mrs. Barber, who is extolled, in the most extravagant manner, as eminent for genius and merit, an honour to her country and to her sex; the best female poet of this or any other age, honoured or envied by every man of genius in England. Queen Caroline was extremely incensed at the tenor of these letters, as well she might, nor did she drop her resentment, although Mrs. Howard expressed her conviction that they were a forgery. Swift, on his part, wrote to Pope and to Mrs. Howard, disavowing the letters alluded to, disclaiming those extravagant eulogies which were heaped on Mrs. Barber with so little modesty, and explaining, that he had only taken an interest in her subscription, meaning to assist humble and indigent merit. Nothing more indeed could be inferred from the terms of his

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* Her pretended intimacy at the deanery was in the highest degree exaggerated, for she was never even seen there by Mrs. Whiteway. Yet, in some way or other, she had acquired considerable knowledge of the Dean's habits. For example, one of her anecdotes is, that she saw Swift cut the leaves out of a handsomely bound book of poems, and put them into the chimney grate, saying, he would give them what they wanted greatly—*fire*—and that she was employed by him to paste into the cover the letters of his friends. Now, among Dr Lyons' papers, there are actually the folio boards of a book which has suffered this operation, and in the inside, a list, in Swift's hand, of the letters which had been pasted in to supply the original contents

letter to Lord Orrery, printed in Mrs. Barber's book, as preliminary to her dedication to that nobleman. Nor was it to be thought that he would have expressed himself in terms of such exaggeration to Queen Caroline, while he was writing his real opinion to the public in a tone of decent moderation. But in this exculpation, he resumed all his former causes of displeasure against the queen and Mrs. Howard (now Countess of Suffolk), particularly his being advised by the latter to remain in London after the death of George I. when he designed to have visited the continent; nor did he forget the unrequited present of Irish silk, nor her majesty's omitting to send the promised medals. Lady Suffolk returned a good-humoured answer, and Lady Betty Germaine afterwards undertook, with great spirit, the defence of her friend. But the idea of her insincerity was too deeply impressed upon the Dean's mind; all future correspondence was dropped between them; and the breach became irreconcilable between Swift and the court.

The reader may be disposed to ask, who could have taken it upon them to forge letters addressed to the queen by such a person? The only letter preserved is in a large female hand, bearing no resemblance whatever to that of the Dean, any more than the outrageous compliments to Mrs. Barber correspond with his taste or style, who, even in praising his dearest friends, usually conveyed his eulogy under a mask of irony, and whose taste was too just to bestow such extravagant commendations on verses which scarce reach mediocrity. It is therefore probable they were forged by Mrs. Barber, or some of her friends, which is the more likely, as scandal imputed to her an intrigue with an Irish literary character of some distinction. The Pilkingtons, husband and wife, were also acquainted with the poetess, and either of them was capable, from talents and disposition, to have committed such an imposture, and knew enough of the Dean's style to execute such a clumsy imitation as that letter exhibits. There is some reason to think Mrs. Barber became alarmed at the probable consequence of these letters, and dreaded the queen's resentment. Indeed, the vexation that Swift was to experience from these unworthy Pilkingtons did not terminate here, and it may be as well to conclude the subject at once.

Swift readily abandoned the profits of his publications to those whom he meant to favour, and, in his regard for Mrs. Barber, he permitted her to sell, for her own benefit, the "Verses to a Lady, who desired to be addressed in the heroic style." She conveyed them to the press through the medium of the notorious Pilkington. Some passages awakened the wrath of Walpole, who, though generally indifferent to satire, seems to have feared that of the Dean, and caught at the opportunity of making his publishers an example. Pilkington betrayed both Barber the printer and Motte the bookseller; and they were subjected to repeated examinations before the privy-council. But as neither judged it necessary to be punctual in recollecting any circumstances which could be prejudicial to themselves, they were discharged without any punishment. Indeed, according to

our modern ideas of libels, we search the poem in vain for any passage upon which such a charge could be grounded. But it is possible that it does not now appear in its original state, nor has the editor ever seen the first edition. Swift's eyes were now opened to the infamy of the Pilkingtons, which he expressed strongly in a letter to his old friend, Alderman Barber. For Mrs. Barber, however, he retained his regard, and at her request, so late as 1736, bestowed upon her the manuscript of his "Essay on Polite Conversation," a set of dialogues which he had compiled thirty years before, for the purpose of exposing the quaint and tritical smartnesses which good spirits and gaiety of temper pass off in certain circles for wit and brilliancy. At the same time it must be owned, that, in the editor's apprehension at least, the Dean's native humour has predominated over his desire to ridicule the conversation of the times, for those who frequent society must often have partaken in dialogues much more tiresome than those of Miss Notable and Tom Neverout. The predominance of proverbs in these dialogues must certainly have been rather owing to the Dean's peculiar humour, than to any custom or fashion of the time.

The occasional poems which the Dean published about this time, were numerous and of various kinds. Some were satirical, and such were almost universally given to the public anonymously by means of the hawkers. Under this description fall the various political poems already mentioned; and such as we have still to allude to, the attacks upon Lord Allen and Tighe, published in the "Intelligencer," or in single sheets or broadsides, as they are generally termed, which were consigned to the hawkers. These may be classed with his political satires in prose, since the Dean seldom was offended to the extent of making a public assault upon his adversary, without attacking him at once with both weapons, of prose and verse.

There was another class of fugitive pieces in which the Dean neglected both the decency due to his station as a clergyman and a gentleman, and his credit as a man of literature. These were poems of a coarse and indelicate character, where his imagination dwelt upon filthy and disgusting subjects, and his ready talents were employed to embody its impurities in humorous and familiar verse. The best apology for this unfortunate perversion of taste, indulgence of caprice, and abuse of talent, is the habits of the times, and situation of the author. In the former respect, we should do great injustice to the present day, by comparing our manners with those of the reign of George I. The writings even of the most esteemed poets of that period, contain passages which, in modern times, would be accounted to deserve the pillory. Nor was the tone of conversation more pure than that of composition; for the taint of Charles II.'s reign continued to infect society until the present reign, when, if not more moral, we have become at least more decent than our fathers:* and although

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* The Editor was told by his late regretted friend, Mr. John Kemble, that there existed a distinct oral tradition of a conversation having passed between a lady of

Swift's offences of this description certainly far exceeded those of contemporary authors, the peculiarities of his habits and state of mind are also to be received in extenuation of his grossness. This unfortunate propensity seems nearly allied to the misanthropy which was a precursor of his mental derangement; and notwithstanding the talent employed upon those coarse subjects, "The Lady's Dressing-Room," —"Cassinus and Peter,"—"Chloe," and other poems of that class, are to be ranked with the description of the Yahoos, as the marks of an incipient disorder of the mind, which induced the author to dwell upon degrading and disgusting subjects, from which all men, in possession of healthful taste and sound faculties, turn with abhorrence. If it be true, as alleged by Delany, that this propensity only distinguished the latter years of Swift's life,* it may be more readily accounted for from this cause, than by supposing that Swift acquired from Pope a habit of thinking and writing, in which he far exceeded Pope himself. Indeed, as he used to call upon Pope to admire Rabelais more than the Bard of Twickenham was disposed to do, it may be urged with probability, that Swift rather led the way than received lessons in the coarseness so rankly practised by the witty Frenchman. It may be lastly remembered, that neither in this nor other cases, (unless when he had some particular point in view,) did the Dean write with a view to publication. He produced and read his poems to the little circle of friends, where he presided as absolute dictator, where all applauded the manner, and none, it may be presumed, ventured to criticise the subject. Copies were requested, and frequently granted. If refused, the auditors contrived to write down from memory an imperfect version. These, in the usual course of things, were again copied repeatedly, until at length they fell into the hands of some hackney author or bookseller, who, for profit, or to affront the author, or with both views, gave them to the public. It would seem that, even to Pope himself, Swift refused an explicit acknowledgment of his having written them.

The verses of society, to borrow a phrase from the French, those

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high rank seated in a box in the theatre, and Mr. Congreve, the celebrated dramatist, who was placed at some distance; which is so little fit for these pages, that a rake of common outward decency would hardly employ such language in a brothel. Indeed, it is only necessary to refer to the ordinary novels by which our ancestors were amused, to estimate the improvement of public delicacy. The Editor was acquainted with an old lady of family, who assured him that, in her younger days, Mrs. Behn's novels were as currently upon the toilette as the works of Miss Edgeworth at present; and described with some humour her own surprise, when, the book falling into her hands after a long interval of years, and, when its contents were quite forgotten, she found it altogether impossible to endure, at the age of fourscore, what at fifteen she, like all the fashionable world of the time, had perused without an idea of impropriety.

* So says Delany, and adds, that he had heard the Dean rebuke Stella with great asperity for using a coarse allusion in society. His delicacy, however, must have been only occasional and capricious, for the Journal furnishes many instances how little it influenced his own correspondence with females.

light passages of humour which were written merely for the circle in which Swift lived at the time, have been already noticed. Besides the constant war of jest and gibe and whimsical eccentricity which was kept up between the Dean and Sheridan, he had now formed an intimacy with Sir Arthur Acheson and his lady, which gave occasion to some of his most distinguished productions of this kind. At their seat of Gosford, in the north of Ireland, he spent in 1728–9 almost a whole year, assisting Sir Arthur in his agricultural improvements, and lecturing, as usual, the lady of the manor, upon the improvement of her health by walking, and her mind by reading; and he appears to have found a docile pupil as well as an obliging hostess. Sir Arthur himself thought with the Dean on political subjects, was a good scholar and fond of the classics, which predilections formed his bond of union with Swift. The circumstance of his letting a ruinous building, called Hamilton's Bawn, to the Crown for a barrack, not only occasioned his being distinguished in the "Apology for Lord Carteret," but gave rise to one of the Dean's most lively pieces of fugitive humour.* The company also whom he met at Market-Hill was agreeable to him. Among these were distinguished Robert and Henry Leslie, sons of the celebrated nonjuror, Dr. Leslie.

The younger brother, Henry Leslie, was an excellent scholar, and a perfect fine gentleman. He had attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the Spanish service, but lost his commission upon a regulation being adopted against the employment of Protestants. He resided for several years in the town of Market-Hill, near Sir Arthur Acheson's house, and Swift appears to have been his guest for about six months, in 1730, the year following his long residence in Sir Arthur Acheson's family. At Market-Hill he also met Captain Creichton, an aged and reduced officer of dragoons, whose campaigns had been chiefly directed against the Scotch west-country Whigs during the reigns of Charles II. and James II. To relieve this old gentleman's necessities, Swift compiled his tales of youthful adventure into a distinct narrative, which was published for the captain's benefit, with considerable success.

His residence at Market-Hill was so agreeable to Swift, that at one time he seems to have thought of rendering it more permanent, by taking a lease from Sir Arthur, with the purpose of building a villa. The name of the chosen spot was changed from Drumlack to Drapier's Hill, in order the better to deserve the intended honour; and Sir Arthur, or some friend in his name, published a poem in the "Dublin Journal," addressed to the Dean, and exulting in the future fame of a place on which he had resolved to fix his residence. If we are to interpret literally the poetical apology which Swift made for laying aside this project, he had not found Sir Arthur uniformly guided by his opinion in the management of his estate, and had discovered that the

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* The Grand Question Debated, "Whether Hamilton's Bawn should be turned into a Barrack or Malt-house?"

knight's taste in literature, being turned towards metaphysics, was more different from his own than he had expected. But a growing reluctance to expend money, and the distance of the situation from Dublin, a distance rendered incommodious by the Dean's increasing infirmities, were probably the real reasons for his declining a project, adopted perhaps hastily, and without much reflection.

Indeed his presence as a visitor, in the state of his health and spirits, was not altogether without inconvenience. Family tradition says, that Swift was already subject to those capricious and moody fits of melancholy and ill-humour, which preceded the decay of his understanding. He sometimes retired from table, and had his victuals carried into his own apartment, from which he would not stir till his good-humour returned. And in one of those fits of caprice he took the liberty, during Sir Arthur Acheson's absence, to cut down an old and picturesque thorn near the house, which his landlord particularly valued. On this occasion, Sir Arthur was seriously displeased, and the Dean was under the necessity of propitiating him by those verses which have rendered the old thorn at Market-Hill immortal.*

Such stories, imperfectly reported by scandal, and listened to with malignant greediness by envy, occasioned a charge against Swift, similar to that which was preferred after his residence at Gaulstown

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* Mr. Sheridan has preserved two anecdotes of Swift about this period. Captain Hamilton of Castle-Hamilton, a plain country gentleman, but of excellent natural sense, came upon a visit at Market-Hill, while the Dean was staying there. "Sir Arthur, upon hearing of his friend's arrival, ran out to receive him at the door, followed by Swift. The captain, who did not see the Dean, as it was in the dusk of the evening, in his blunt way, upon entering the house, exclaimed, 'that he was very sorry he was so unfortunate to choose that time for his visit.'—'Why so?'—'Because I hear Dean Swift is with you. He is a great scholar, a wit; a plain country 'squire will have but a bad time of it in his company, and I don't like to be laughed at.' Swift then stepped to the captain, from behind Sir Arthur, where he had stood, and said to him, 'Pray, Captain Hamilton, do you know how to say *yes*, or *no*, properly?'—'Yes, I think I have understanding enough for that.'—'Then give me your hand,—depend upon it, you and I will agree very well.' The captain told me he never passed two months so pleasantly in his life, nor had ever met with so agreeable a companion as Swift proved to be during the whole time."

The other anecdote records a ready reply by a gentleman who passed by the name of Killbuck Tuite to Swift, who upbraided him with not knowing the way to Market-Hill. "'That is the way,' said Swift, 'with all you Irish blockheads; you never know the way to any place beyond the next dunghill.'—'Why,' answered Tuite, 'I never was at Market-Hill: Have not you been there, Mr. Dean?' He acknowledged he had.—'Then what a damned English blockhead are you,' replied Killbuck, 'to find fault with me for not directing you the way to a place where I never had been, when you don't know it yourself, who have been there!' Swift, with a countenance of great counterfeited terror, immediately rose and changed seats with Doughty, (a man of great size and strength,) who happened to be next to him, placing the giant between him and Tuite to protect him against that wild man, and skulking behind him like a child, with well acted fear, to the no small entertainment of the company; who, however, were not sorry that the Dean had met with his match."

House. Against this malicious allegation of ingratitude and inhospitality, which was urged in some verses handed about Dublin, and afterwards printed, Swift defended himself at length in a letter to Dr. Jinny, Rector of Armagh. He mentions the "Grand Question Debated" as the ground of the charge, and describes this sort of composition as merely sallies of fancy and humour, intended for private diversion; appeals to Jinny's knowledge of the whole history of the verses on the Barrack, and the favourable reception it met with from Sir Arthur Acheson and his lady. The charge of ingratitude brought against him he repels with suitable disdain. "I was originally," he observes, "as unwilling to be libelled as the nicest man can be; but having been used to such treatment ever since I unhappily began to be known, I am now grown hardened; and while the friends I have left will continue to use me with any kindness, I shall need but a small degree of philosophy to bear me up against those who are pleased to be my enemies on the score of party zeal, and the hopes of turning that zeal to account. One thing, I confess, would still touch me to the quick; I mean if any person of true genius would employ his pen against me; but if I am not very partial to myself, I cannot remember, that among at least two thousand papers full of groundless reflections against me, hundreds of which I have seen, and heard of more, I ever saw any one production that the meanest writer could have cause to be proud of: for which I can assign a very natural reason; that, during the whole busy time of my life, the men of wit (in England) were all my particular friends, although many of them differed from me in opinions of public persons and proceedings."

In this society, and with these amusements, but with health gradually undermined, Swift endured, and occasionally enjoyed, existence, from the death of Stella, in 1727, till about 1732.

CHAPTER VII.

Swift's conduct as a dignified Clergyman — His controversies with the Dissenters—And with the Bishops of Ireland—Verses on his own Death—Faulkner's edition of his Works—His quarrel with Betteswortb—Satire on Quadrille—Legion Club—Controversy concerning the lowering of the Gold Coin—History of Queen Anne's reign—Swift's private Life at this period—He disposes of his Fortune to found a Hospital—He sinks into incapacity—His Death.

ERE proceeding to the melancholy remainder of Swift's life, we may here resume an account of his conduct as a dignitary of the Church of England, and of the various occasions in which he stood forth in her behalf, when he conceived her rights assaulted and endangered.

It ought to be first noticed, that Swift possessed, in the fullest

degree, the only secure foundation for excellence in the clerical profession—a sincere and devout faith in the doctrines of Christianity. This was doubted during his life, on account of the levities in the "Tale of a Tub;" and also because he carried his detestation of hypocrisy to such a blameable excess, that he was rather willing to appear indifferent about religion, than to be suspected of affecting over zeal in her cause. Thus, when in London, he rose early in the morning, that he might attend public worship without observation; and in Dublin, Delany was six months in his house before he discovered that the Dean read prayers to his family with punctual regularity. He was equally regular in his private devotions. The place which he occupied as an oratory was a small closet, in which, when his situation required to be in some degree watched, he was daily observed to pray with great devotion. When his faculties, and particularly his memory, began to fail, he used often to inquire anxiously whether he had been in this apartment in the course of the day, and if answered in the affirmative, seemed to be delivered from the apprehension that he had neglected the duties of devotion.

Thus impressed with the practical belief of the truths which it was his profession to teach, he was punctual in the discharge of those public duties incumbent on his dignified station in the church. He read the service in his cathedral regularly, though with more force than grace of elocution, and administered the sacrament weekly, in the most solemn and devout manner, with his own hands. He preached also in his turn; and the sermons which have been preserved belie his own severe censure, "that he could only preach pamphlets." On the contrary, Swift's discourses contain strong, sensible, and precise language, which distinguishes all his prose writings. They are not, indeed, without a cast of his peculiar humour, but it is not driven beyond the verge of propriety. As he considered the power of pulpit elocution as of the last consequence to the church, he used to attend particularly to the discourse of every young clergyman who preached in his cathedral, and never failed to minute down such words as seemed too obscure for the understandings of a popular congregation. In his Letter to a Clergyman, he has dwelt upon this common error of young preachers, which, with other excellent remarks contained in that treatise, shows that Swift not only valued the dignity of his order, but knew that it can only be maintained by the regular discharge of clerical duties in a decorous and practical manner.

But his zeal for the interests of his younger brethren was not only shown by public and private precepts, and by the tracts he wrote upon the Fates of Clergymen, and the Hatred against the Clergy;—he endeavoured to serve them more effectually by patronage and recommendation. It was to this purpose chiefly he turned his intimacy with Carteret, and his long friendship with Lady Betty Germaine, who resided in family with his successor, the Duke of Dorset, and possessed influence with him. The frequency and urgency of his applications, as well as, generally speaking, the worth of those in whose favour they

were made, give the best and most solid proof of his real interest in the promotion of clergymen of virtue and learning.

Within his own deanery, Swift was scrupulously accurate in maintaining and improving the revenues of the living, and rejected every proposal which was made to raise wealth for himself, at the expense of the establishment. When he was almost sunk into imbecility, and love of money, a habit rather than a passion, seemed to be his sole remaining motive of action, he rejected, with indignation, a considerable sum, offered for the renewal of a lease, upon terms which would have been unfavourable for his successors. To the last moment of his capacity, he kept an accurate account of the revenues of the cathedral, and even of the sums collected and expended in charity, of which his accounts are now before the Editor. One is dated so low as 1742.*

Upon the same principle, the Dean took care, by consulting proper judges, that the choir of his cathedral should be well regulated, and his correspondence with Dr. Arbuthnot often turns upon procuring proper choristers. His zeal in this particular also survived the decay of his abilities, for he drew up a singular document, prohibiting the members of his choir from attending ordinary music meetings, so late as 28th January, 1741. The Dean himself did not affect either to be a judge or admirer of music, yet he possessed the power of mimicking it in a wonderful degree. A person regretting at his table that he had not heard Mr. Rosingrave, then just returned from Italy, perform upon the organ; "You shall hear him now," said Swift, and immediately started off into a burlesque imitation of the chromatics of the musician, to the inexpressible amusement of the company, excepting one old gentleman, who remained unmoved, because, as he said, "he had heard Mr. Rosingrave himself perform the same piece that morning." This exploit led to the Dean's composing the celebrated cantata, burlesquing the doctrine of imitative sounds in poetry and music. It was set to music by Dr. John Ecclin.

With a great zeal for the rights of his order, which did not, however, in his own opinion, transgress the bounds of toleration, Dean Swift, upon every occasion, when the question occurred, obstinately resisted any relaxation of the penal laws against dissenters. So early

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* The entries in these records sometimes exhibit the Dean's peculiar humour, as for example,—

"Increased to Mr. Lyon by the pernicious vice and advice of my daily spunge and [a word illegible] Will's son, to 12 scoundrels at 6½d. per week, fortnight, 0*l.* 6*s.* 6d.

1739-40, January 12. A long extraordinary cold season, and I was worried by Mr. Lyon to give more than the fund will support. However I give ——— 20 shill.

March 11. To a blind parson and his wife, 0*l.* 2s. 8½d.

The Will's son above mentioned, was Francis Wilson, Prebendary of Kilmactolway, living then an inmate in the Dean's family, but expelled from it in 1742, for using personal violence to Swift.

as 1708, he had published his Letter on the Sacramental Test, and, about twenty years after, his Narrative of the Attempts of the Dissenters, for the Repeal of the Test Act, appeared in the *Correspondent*, a periodical paper of the day. This, in 1731, he reprinted as an appendix to the "Presbyterians' Plea of Merit," a treatise which gave the dissenters great offence, as it contradicted and even ridiculed their pretensions to peculiar zeal for the reformed religion and the Protestant succession. The clamour which this pamphlet excited, did not prevent Swift from following it up, in the next year, by an ironical statement, entitled, "The Advantages Proposed by Repealing the Sacramental Test." In the same year he published "Queries relating to the Sacramental Test;" and in 1733, "Reasons for Repealing the Test in favour of the Roman Catholics;" in all which treatises, the cause of the dissenters was treated with very great severity, and it was more than insinuated, that relaxation ought to be made rather in favour even of the Catholics, than of the Protestant dissenters. The former he compared to a lion, but chained and despoiled of his fangs and claws; the latter to a wild cat loose, in full possession of teeth and talons, and ready to fix them into the Church of England. On the same subject the Dean wrote several fugitive pieces of poetry, and probably more occasional tracts than have yet been recovered.

While Swift was with one hand combating the dissenters, he maintained with the other a controversy against the majority of the bishops of his own church. After the accession of the House of Hanover, divines of low-church principles were of course selected to fill vacant sees, besides which, in cases where the minister found himself obliged to confer preferment, without a strict regard to character, he naturally inclined to make the party an Irish rather than an English prelate. When some instances of this kind, real or alleged, were lamented in Swift's presence, he denied the imputation, with his usual ironical bitterness. "No blame," he said, "rested with the court for these appointments. Excellent and moral men had been selected upon every occasion of vacancy. But it unfortunately has uniformly happened, that as these worthy divines crossed Hounslow Heath, on their road to Ireland, to take possession of their bishoprics, they have been regularly robbed and murdered by the highwaymen frequenting that common, who seize upon their robes and patents, come over to Ireland, and are consecrated bishops in their stead."

With such an idea of the Irish prelacy, joined to his native spirit of independence, Swift was induced to regard with a very jealous eye any innovations which they might propose, affecting the great body of the clergy. Under this impression, he wrote, in 1723, "Arguments against enlarging the Power of Bishops in letting Leases," a latitude which, he foreboded, might lead ultimately to the impoverishment of the church. In the same tract he combats some of Lord Molesworth's arguments against the mode of collecting tithes. In 1731, the bishops of Ireland, or a majority of them, brought two bills into Parliament, one for the

purpose of enforcing clerical residence, and, with that view, for compelling the clergy to build houses upon their glebes; the other for subdividing large livings into as many portions as the bishops should think fit, reserving to the original church only 300*l.* per annum. In these bills, which were passed in the House of Lords, Swift thought he discovered a scheme on the part of the Irish prelates to impoverish and degrade the body of the clergy, besides subjecting them to the absolute dominion of their spiritual superiors. He argued against the measures with great acrimony, in two tracts, entitled "On the Bill for the Clergy residing upon their Livings," and "Considerations upon two bills sent down from the House of Lords to the House of Commons, relating to the Clergy." Both bills were thrown out by the House of Commons; upon which occasion Swift indulged himself in some bitter poetical satires against the discomfited bishops. The violence of his dislike to these proceedings breaks out in a private letter to his former friend Dr. Sterne, Bishop of Clogher, in which he entitles them "those two abominable bills for enslaving and beggaring the clergy;" rejoices that he was not in intimate habits with the bishop when he voted for them, lest he should have discovered "marks of indignation, horror, and despair, both in words and deportment;" and concludes with calling God to witness, "that I did then, and do now, and shall for ever, firmly believe, that every bishop who gave his vote for either of these bills, did it with no other view (bating farther promotion) than a premeditated design, from the spirit of ambition and love of arbitrary power, to make the whole body of the clergy their slaves and vassals until the day of judgment, under the load of poverty and contempt. I have no room for more charitable thoughts, except for those who will answer now, as they must at that dreadful day, that what they did was out of perfect ignorance, want of consideration, hope of future promotion, (an argument not to be conquered,) or the persuasion of cunninger brethren than themselves; when I saw a bishop, whom I had known so many years, fall into the same *snare*, which word I use in partiality to your lordship. Upon this open avowed attempt, in almost the whole bench, to destroy the church, I resolved to have no more commerce with persons of such prodigious grandeur, who, I feared, in a little time, would expect me to kiss their slipper. It is happy for me that I know the persons of very few bishops; and it is my constant rule never to look into a coach, by which I avoid the terror that such a sight would strike me with." To this violent philippic Bishop Sterne returned a very civil and temperate reply.

About this period, that is, between 1730 and 1735, the Dean produced some of his best pieces of poetry. The Rhapsody on Poetry, which contains perhaps a more sustained flight of poetical expression than any of his other compositions, is dated in 1733. Dr. King gives us the curious information, that he was assured by Swift that he received the thanks of the royal family, who had interpreted literally the ironical passages of praise addressed to them in the poem,—a singular instance of obtuseness of intellect!

The celebrated Verses on Swift's own Death were probably written about 1730 or 1731. This singular compound of knowledge of mankind, satire, and misanthropy, is founded upon the well-known maxim of Rochefoucault, "That we find something not unpleasing in the misfortunes of our best friends." A spurious copy, containing only about two hundred lines, was published in London, under the title of the "Life and Character of Dr. Swift, written by himself," with a dedication to Pope. This the Dean, in a letter to his illustrious friend, imputes to his having shown the real poem to his acquaintance, some of whom had retained passages by heart. But he reprobates the spurious piece, as full of the cant which he most despised. "I would sink," he says, "to be a vicar in Norfolk, rather than be charged with such a performance." In the same letter he expresses his determination not to print the true copy, as being improper to be seen until the author should be no more. On this point he afterwards altered his opinion; and so late as January, 1738-9, entrusted Dr. William King of Oxford* with a copy to be published in London. But as the characters of the prime-minister and Queen Caroline were touched with no gentle hand, Dr. King's courage failed him, and the poem was published in a mutilated condition, omitting all such sarcasms as might be construed into a libel. The Dean, in whose estimation these passages were probably the most valuable part of the poem, was displeased with the caution of his editor; and Faulkner, the Dublin bookseller, published, by his direction, a full and genuine copy of these celebrated verses, with notes at length upon the political allusions, in which the story of the promised medals was not omitted.

To return to the year 1732.—It appears that, about this time, the piracy of the booksellers upon the Dean's literary property had alarmed his friend Pope, who put Swift upon his guard against the solicitations of the London trade, the rather as he himself designed a fourth volume of the Miscellanies, which he published in the month of February, 1732–3. His object he states to have been, to secure a genuine edition of the most valuable of the Dean's fugitive pieces, and to anticipate the schemes of the booksellers, who were publishing what they could collect, without discrimination, inserting some of his own fugitive pieces, in hopes, as he modestly expresses himself, "his weeds might pass for a sort of wild flowers" when mingled with his friend's garland.

But Faulkner, who was now rising into eminence as a Dublin bookseller, chiefly under the countenance and patronage of Dean Swift, was

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* Dr. William King, son of the Rev. Peregrine King, born in 1685, became Principal of St. Mary's Hall in 1718. He stood candidate for the University, and being unsuccessful, went over to Ireland in 1727, where he became well known to Swift. His learning, his turn for satire, and a determined spirit of hatred to the existing government, recommended him to Swift, whose confidence he enjoyed. He was long at the head of the Non-juring or Jacobite interest at Oxford, but finally deserted it. Dr. King's Anecdotes of his Own Times have been published, and contain some interesting particulars

the first who had the honour of giving to the world a collected and uniform edition of the works of this distinguished English classic. The original edition consisted of four volumes, (increased after the Dean's death by repeated supplements.) The arrangement is uncommonly confused and incoherent; nor is there the least reason for supposing, as seems to be intimated by Lord Orrery, and is positively averred by Wilson in the "Swiftiana," that the Dean himself revised, or even authorized, the publication. Faulkner, after the decay of the Dean's faculties, no doubt found his interest in propagating such a report. But Swift's letters have since shown that he was barely passive upon the occasion. Indeed, far from giving Faulkner authority for the publication, the Dean avers that he expressly told him, he was desirous his works should not be printed in Dublin, but in London. Faulkner replied, that as the pieces were the property of various booksellers, they could not be published in a collected state in England; that he was assured of a numerous list of subscribers; and, hoping the Dean would not be angry at his pursuing his own interest, he intimated an intention to proceed in his purpose, even without permission of the author. This is the more to be regretted, as Charles Ford, whom the Dean had entrusted so often in conveying his publications to the press, had offered the use of his corrected copy of "Gulliver's Travels," and other facilities for improving a genuine edition. Swift, as the laws of Ireland afforded no remedy, had no alternative but remaining quiescent; and he repeatedly expresses his regret that the collection had not been published in London, by an agreement among the English booksellers who held his copyrights, rather than in Dublin. There is, therefore, no room for supposing that this Dublin edition underwent the correction of the Dean; and, indeed, so great was his indifference to literary reputation, that it is possible he would have given himself little trouble upon the matter, even had the book been published in London, as he himself desired.*

The principal interest which Faulkner could claim in the Dean was his having suffered from political prosecution, a fate which, sooner or

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* The late Mr. Deane Swift used to express great displeasure at Lord Orrery's having insinuated that his distinguished relative had corrected the Dublin edition. The Dean had a regard for Faulkner as an industrious young man, but he was much too frivolous a character to be admitted to his confidence. There is a well-known anecdote, that Faulkner once called on the Dean, full dressed as a fashionable beau of the day. Swift received him as a stranger, with much affected respect, but refused to believe he was George Faulkner. The bookseller was obliged to retire, and reappear in a dress more suited to his station. "Ah, my good friend George," said the Dean, "I am happy to see you! Here was a coxcomb an hour ago, who pretended to pass for you, but I sent him packing." The Dean's acquiescence in Faulkner's edition, though he had no means to prevent it, raised the jealousy of Motte, and other London booksellers, who held his copyrights. The former filed a bill in Chancery against Faulkner, to prevent the sale of the Dublin edition of Swift's Works in England. Swift interposed on this occasion as mediator, and it would appear his mediation was successful, from the subsequent amicable intercourse between the two booksellers.

later, befel most of Swift's publishers. The circumstance arose out of a remarkable incident of the Dean's life, which is now to be narrated.

In a satire printed in 1733, ridiculing the dissenters for pretending to the title of "Brother Protestants and Fellow Christians," the Dean, among other ludicrous illustrations of their presumption, introduced this simile:

> Thus at the bar the booby B——,
> Though half a crown o'erpays his sweat's worth,
> Who knows in law, nor text, nor margent,
> Calls Singleton his brother Sergeant.

The blank in the termination of the first couplet indicated Mr. Bettesworth, a member of Parliament, and sergeant at law,* remarkable for his florid elocution in the House, and at the bar, who had been very active in promoting those proceedings which Swift regarded as prejudicial to the clergy. Upon reading the lines, he was wrought up to such a height of indignation, that, drawing out a knife, he swore he would, with that very instrument, cut off the Dean's ears. After this denunciation, he went in the height of his fury to the deanery, and from thence to Mr. Worrall's, where Swift was on a visit. The family were at dinner, and the stranger being shown into another apartment, the Dean was called out to him. The sergeant advanced to him with great haughtiness, and said, "Doctor Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, I am Sergeant Bet-tes-worth:" this being his affected mode of pronouncing his name. "Of what regiment?" answered Swift. After a very angry parley, Bettesworth began to raise his voice, and gave such indications of violence, that Mr. Worrall and the servants rushing in, compelled him to withdraw. The tradition in the Dean's family bears, that Bettesworth actually drew his knife: but the Dean's own narrative, transmitted to the lord-lieutenant, does not countenance that last excess, only affirming, that, by Bettesworth's own report, he had a sharp knife in his pocket, and a footman attending in the hall to open the door to one or two ruffians who waited his summons in the street.† The Dean remained composed and unmoved during this ex-

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* The rhyme is said to have been suggested by a casual circumstance. A porter brought a burden to the Dean's house, while he was busy with the poem, and labouring to find a rhyme for this uncommon name, the more anxiously, that Bettesworth exulted in the idea of its being impossible. The fellow's demand being considered as exorbitant, he wiped his forehead, saying, with the humour of a low Irishman, "Oh! your reverence, my sweat's worth half a crown." The Dean instantly caught at the words, "Ay, that it is,—there's half a crown for you." This anecdote is given on the authority of Mr. Theophilus Swift.

† Various accounts of this interview have been given, but that of the Dean to the Duke of Dorset, written immediately after it took place, ought to be preferred. The following additional circumstances are mentioned by Sheridan. "O Mr. Dean,' said Bettesworth, in answer to the retort mentioned in the text, "We know your powers of raillery, you know well enough that I am one of his majesty's sergeants at law."—"What then, sir?"—"Why, then, sir, I am come to demand of you, whether you

traordinary scene. It was fortunate for the sergeant's person, as well as his character, that he did not proceed in his meditated vengeance on the person of an old man, and a clergyman, since the attempt must have been made at the risk of his life. So soon as the news transpired, the inhabitants of that part of Dublin, called Earl of Meath's Liberty, assembled, and sent a deputation to Swift, requesting his permission to take vengeance on Bettesworth, for his intended violence to the Patriot of Ireland. Swift returned them thanks for their zeal, but enjoined them to disperse peaceably, and, adding a donation of two or three guineas, prohibited them from getting drunk with the money, adding, "You are my subjects, and I expect you will obey me." It is no slight proof of the despotism of his authority, founded as it was solely upon respect and gratitude, that his defenders complied with his recommendation in both particulars, and peaceably and soberly separated to their dwellings. For some time, however, they formed a guard among themselves for the purpose of watching the deanery, and the person of the Drapier, lest Bettesworth should have adopted any new scheme of violence.

The consequences of this rashness were very serious to Mr. Bettesworth, for not only was he overwhelmed by the Dean and his friends with satire and ridicule, to which he had shown himself so keenly sensible, but, in the bitterness of his heart, he confessed, in the House of Commons, that Swift's satire had deprived him of twelve hundred pounds a year. Yet his irritability was rather increased than allayed by this unpleasing result, as appears from a subsequent instance.

Dr. Josiah Horte, Bishop of Kilmore, afterwards Archbishop of Tuam, although he had formerly been himself an object of Swift's satire, was now advanced so far into his intimacy, that the Dean, in 1736, condescended to be the prelate's agent, in correcting and transmitting to Faulkner, a satire composed by Horte, upon the general taste for Quadrille; or, in the quaint words of the bishop's request, "he pruned the loose feathers, sent the kite to the Falconer, and set it a-flying." The satire was of a very general and commonplace kind, but unfortunately proposed, among other regulations, that all disputes

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are the author of this poem (producing it) and these villainous lines on me?"—at the same time reading them aloud with great vehemence of emphasis, and much gesticulation.—"Sir," said Swift, "it was a piece of advice given me in my early days by Lord Somers, never to own or disown any writing laid to my charge; because if I did this in some cases, whatever I did not disown afterward would infallibly be imputed to me as mine. Now, sir, I take this to have been a very wise maxim, and as such have followed it ever since; and I believe it will hardly be in the power of all your rhetoric, as great a master as you are of it, to make me swerve from that rule." Many other things passed, as related in the above-mentioned letter. But when Bettesworth was going away, he said, "Well, since you will give me no satisfaction in this affair, let me tell you, your gown is your protection; under the sanction of which, like one of your own Yahoos who had climbed up to the top of a high tree, you sit secure, and squirt your filth round on all mankind." Swift had candour enough, not to conceal this last circumstance, at the same time saying, "that the fellow showed more wit in this than he thought him possessed of."

and altercations at play should be laid before the "renowned Sergeant B——," with a fee of one fish, *ad valorem*, and a right of appeal to a wooden figure in Essex Street, known by the name of the Upright Man, in case the sergeant's decision should be unsatisfactory. This insinuation was sufficient to rouse the angry feelings of Mr. Bettesworth, who, although the name was dropped out of subsequent editions of the satire, thought it worth his while to complain to the House of Commons of breach of privilege. Faulkner the printer was arrested, put to considerable expense, and thrown into jail among ordinary felons, though he prayed to be admitted to bail. The Dean, whose blood boiled at these tyrannical proceedings, avenged himself upon Hartley Hutchinson, the justice of peace who signed the committal, by two or three severe lampoons, and wrote, upon the same occasion, the indignant lines commencing,

> Better we all were in our graves,
> Than live in slavery to slaves.

Faulkner naturally looked to Horte for some indemnification; but the bishop intimated to him, "that in such dealings the bookseller is the adventurer, and must run the hazard of gain or loss." This sordid and unhandsome evasion occasioned Swift's writing to the bishop a very severe letter, which, it is to be presumed, produced the bookseller some more satisfactory answer.

In 1733, the Dean's attention was attracted to some proceedings in the Irish Parliament, which seemed to him subversive of the rights of the clergy. A bill had been brought into the House of Commons for encouraging the linen manufactory, containing a clause for commuting, by a perpetual modus, the tithe payable on the articles of hemp and flax. The Dean, with Grattan, Jackson, and other clergymen, on behalf of the clergy of Ireland, presented a petition, praying to be heard by counsel against this part of the bill; and Swift composed, on the same subject, a treatise addressed to the members of the House of Commons. The bill appears, in consequence of this opposition, to have been dropped; but subsequent vexations arose to the clergy from the same quarter.

In 1734, an almost general resistance was made against the tithe of pasturage, or tithe of agistment, as it is technically called. The House of Commons interfered against this claim on the part of the clergy, and so effectually, that the clergy were intimidated from making, and courts of law deterred from receiving, suits upon that ground. The Dean and many of his brethren viewed the conduct of the Commons on this occasion as partial and oppressive,—partial, because so many of the members were affected by that claim, that they might be considered as judging in their own cause, and oppressive, because Swift conceived that the tithe for agistment was as plainly comprised in the act of Henry VIII. as that of corn and hay. Other cases occurred about the same time, which seemed to indicate a general disposition on the part of the great land-proprietors to innovate upon the rights

of the church. A cruel and exaggerated instance was the case of the Reverend Roger Thrcp, who, refusing to surrender to the patron of his living, Colonel Waller, some of its most important rights, is alleged to have been harassed by so many law-suits, assaults, and arrests, that his courage and health gave way under them, and he actually died of a broken heart. Robert Throp, brother of the deceased, presented to Parliament a petition, stating the manifold grievances which his deceased relation had sustained from Colonel Waller, and praying the House to permit the course of law to proceed against him by arrest, notwithstanding his being a member of Parliament. About November, 1735, while this petition was in dependence, the Dean appears to have written for the newspapers a statement of Mr. Throp's case, which produced on the colonei's part an advertisement, offering a reward for the discovery of the author.* When the petition came before the House, it was refused unanimously.

These combined circumstances induced Swift to regard the existing Irish House of Commons as determined enemies to the rights of the church, and as leagued to oppress the clergy. He gave vent to his indignation in more than one satire, but particularly in the last poem of any length or importance which he ever composed, entitled the "Legion Club." Old age had now long overtaken him, and even when he was holding the pen on this occasion, he had a continued and intense attack of his constitutional vertigo, from which he never fully recovered. The "Legion Club" is notwithstanding one of the most animated and poignant satires that even the Dean of St. Patrick's ever produced. It seems almost impossible that the poet should have sustained the extreme virulence of invective with which the description opens. Yet, when the poet descends from general to individual satire, every line has the sting of a hornet. The persons chiefly satirized in this remarkable production, are Sir Thomas Prendergast, Colonel Waller, and other members whom the Dean regarded as most active in opposing the claims of the clergy. "The puppy pair of Dicks," Richard Tighe and Richard Bettesworth, his old foes, are not forgotten.

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* On 8th November, 1735, Mrs. Whiteway writes to the Dean, "Mr. Waller has printed an advertisement, offering ten guineas reward to any person that will discover the author of a paragraph, said to be the case of one Mr. Throp. I do not know whether you heard anything of such an affair before you left town, but I think it is said there is some trial to be about it before the House of Commons, either next week, or the week following. I beg you will not leave your papers and letters on the table, as you used to do at the Deanery, for boys and girls and wives will be peeping."

To this hint the Dean replies, "As to Waller's advertisement, if I was in town I would, for the ten guineas, let him know the author of the narrative; and I wish you would, by a letter in an unknown hand, inform him of what I say; for I want the money to repair some deficiencies here." It would be satisfactory to discover the Dean's "paragraph," which, from the date and internal evidence, must have been distinct from the octavo pamphlet on the same subject, entitled, "Lay Tyranny, or the Clergy Oppressed by Patrons and Impropriators, instanced in the memorable case of the Reverend Mr. Roger Throp." Dublin, 1739.

The poem was no sooner published, than spurious copies appeared, in which the number of individuals satirized was considerably enlarged. It gave great offence, as may easily be supposed, and prosecutions were threatened, but none took place.

About the same time the Dean opposed a scheme proposed by the primate Boulter for regulating the exchange of Ireland, by diminishing the value of the gold coin, which his lordship presaged would be the readiest mode of increasing the quantity of silver currency, of which the want had been much felt. The Dean had a dislike to the primate, which was by no means lessened by his being the real and efficient prime-minister for Ireland, and the chief correspondent of Walpole upon matters affecting that kingdom. He had exercised his satire upon him accordingly. But at the time of lowering the gold coin, Swift's exertions excited a ferment, which, though it subsided sooner, and without producing any change in the intended measure, resembled, in other respects, the opposition to Wood's scheme. The Dean spoke against the measure at the Tholsel or Exchange of Dublin; he distributed songs among the people; and on the day when the proclamation was read, displayed a black flag from the steeple of the cathedral, and caused a dumb or muffled peal to be rung by the bells of St. Patrick's. The discontent of the lower orders was so great, that danger was apprehended to the primate's person, and his house was guarded by soldiers. At the lord mayor's entertainment, the archbishop publicly charged Swift with having inflamed the prejudices of the people against him. "I inflame them!" retorted Swift, conscious of his power among the lower orders, "had I lifted my finger, they would have torn you to pieces,"—a threat which he afterwards expressed in poetry. The measure of lowering the gold coin, however, proved practically advantageous, and the clamour which it excited was speedily forgotten.

Thus ended Swift's last interference in public affairs, in which, excepting during the earlier part of George I.'s reign, he had been actively and often perilously engaged from 1708 to 1736. He continued, however, on all occasions, to express and maintain his original sentiments, of which he was so tenacious, that he refused to accept of the freedom of the city of Cork, until they recorded upon the instrument of freedom, and the silver box in which it was presented, their approbation of his political and patriotic principles, as the ground of distinguishing him by such an honour. At a subsequent period of extreme weakness, Bishop Rundle has mentioned with indecent triumph, especially considering he had called Swift friend, an instance that his political dislikes survived the decay of his mental faculties. In 1741-2, upon the reported disgrace of Lord Orford, he set up an equipage.*

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* The Dean used formerly to say that he was the poorest man in Ireland who was served in plate, and the richest who kept no carriage. The account of his setting up one is thus given by Bishop Rundle, in a letter preserved in the British Museum. "As soon as Dean Swift heard that Lord Orford was dismissed from power, he awakened with one flash of light from his dreaming of what he once

Nor is it to be forgotten, that Bolingbroke and Pulteney fed his antipathy against Walpole and the royal family, by regularly transmitting to him the lampoons of the day.

But although the Dean must from henceforward be considered as having ceased entirely to interest himself in the politics of the day, his mind, as is usual in age, appears to have reverted to those earlier scenes in which he once played a busy part, and he became, in 1737, desirous of publishing the "History of the Peace of Utrecht," which he had written in 1714. With this view he gave the manuscript, now entitled "The History of the Four last Years of Queen Anne," to Dr. King of Oxford, that it might be printed in London. A report of his intention having transpired, seems to have alarmed the Earl of Oxford (son of the celebrated statesman), Mr. Lewis (under-secretary of state during the last years of Queen Anne), and other persons concerned, who feared lest the Dean in his state of mind and body, might be inadequate to the delicate task of correcting a work in which the characters of Harley and all who had acted with him were deeply implicated. Mr. Lewis pressed, in their common name, to be permitted to see the manuscript before it was sent to press; a request which the Dean granted with hesitation and reluctance. The History was accordingly perused by Lord Oxford and some of his friends, and, in a letter from Mr. Lewis, they state various objections to its appearing in its original state. Several of these apply to what may be considered as the *speciosa miracula* of the Dean's narrative, such as the imputations on the courage of Marlborough, and the insinuation that Prince Eugene recommended the assassination of Harley. But they principally demurred to the manner in which the Dean had drawn several characters of the leading Whigs, and expressed their conviction that, if the History were published

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was, and cried, I made a vow that I would set up a coach when that man was turned out of his places; and having the good fortune to behold that day, long despaired of, I will show that I was sincere: and sent for a coach-maker. The operator comes, had one almost ready,—it was sent home,—horses were purchased, —and the Dean entered the triumphant double chariot, supported by two old women, and his daily flatterer, to entertain him with the only music he had an ear to hear at this age; they made up the partie quarree, and with much ado, enabled his decrepit reverence to endure the fatigue of travelling twice round our great square, by the cordial and amusement of their fulsome commendations, which he calls facetious pleasantry. But the next pacquet brought word, (what lying varlets these news-writers are!) that Lord Orford's party revived, &c. Swift sunk back in the corner of the coach, his under jaw fell; he was carried up to his chamber and great chair, and obstinately refused to be lifted into the treacherous vehicle any more, till the newswriters at least shall be hanged for deceiving him to imagine that Lord Orford was *bonâ fide* out of power, though visibly out of place. Now he despairs of seeing vengeance taken on any, who, odd fellow! he thinks more richly deserve it; and since he cannot send them out of the world with dishonour, he intends soon to go out of it in a pet."—Letter signed Thomas Derry, dated March 20, 1741-2. MSS. Birch, 4291. *British Museum.*

The Bishop is incorrect in supposing that Swift laid aside the equipage which was thus set up. It appears from Wilson's affidavit, that Swift, in July, 1742, had a carriage of his own.

without alteration, nothing could save the printer and publisher from some grievous punishment. Lewis, therefore, conjured the Dean, by his own fame, and that of those friends whom he meant to honour by his narrative, and as he valued his personal liberty and the enjoyment of his fortune, not to permit the manuscript to be printed until he had adopted the amendments his letter suggested. The Dean, unable or unwilling to attempt the required alterations, silently acquiesced in the opinion happily expressed by Lewis that the period of which he treated was too remote for a pamphlet, yet too early for a history. What became of the original manuscript does not appear; but the History was published in 1758, by an anonymous editor, who professes to give it as a literary curiosity, from a copy which had been accidentally preserved in Ireland. The whole preface sustains a high and violent tone of Whig politics. To such an uncongenial editor was the Dean to owe a posthumous obligation for publishing a work suppressed during his lifetime at the request, or rather the entreaty, of his Tory friends. The History was coldly received by the public, as relating to events gone by and forgotten. A French version of it appeared in 1765.

It was through the medium of Dr. King that Swift sent to the press, as already observed, the Verses on his own Death, and he seems also to have meditated the publication of his well-known "Instructions to Servants," on which, though it only exists as a fragment, he had bestowed much pains and observation. He himself was a kind, but a strict master, and his mode of managing his domestics would hardly have succeeded with any one but himself, who had established his will as despotic, however capricious.*

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* The story is well known of his commanding "Sweetheart," as he called his cookmaid Mary, to carry down a joint of meat and do it *less*, and on her alleging that was impossible, his grave request, that when in future she pleased to commit a fault, he hoped she would choose one which might be mended. Upon another occasion, after he had permitted Sweetheart to set out on a journey to see a sister's wedding, he sent for her back, by express, to shut the door. At another time, hearing one of his servants in the act of undressing, express a luxurious wish that he could ride to bed, the Dean summoned the man upstairs, commanded him to fetch a horse from the paddock, and prepare him for a journey, and when the poor fellow reported that the horse was ready, "Mount him then, sirrah," said the Dean, "and ride to bed." There is another well-attested anecdote, communicated by the late Mr. William Waller of Allanstown, near Kells, to Mr. Theophilus Swift. Mr. Waller, while a youth, was riding near his father's house, where he met a gentleman on horseback reading. A little surprised, he asked the servant, who followed at some distance, where they came from? "From the Black Lion," answered the man. "And where are you going?"—"To heaven, I believe," rejoined the servant, "for my master's praying and I am fasting." On farther inquiry, it proved that the Dean, who was then going to Laracor, had rebuked this man for presenting him in the morning with dirty boots. "Were they clean," answered the fellow, "they would soon be dirty again."—"And if you eat your breakfast," retorted the Dean, "you will be hungry again, so you shall proceed without it," which circumstance gave rise to the man's bon-mot. Another instance of his strict discipline, communicated by Mr. Swift, shall close this long note.

the servants of others, and told Lord Orrery one day, that the attendant who waited had committed fifteen faults during the time of dinner Yet his mode of reprimanding them was more frequently whimsical than harsh. Upon one occasion, a servant waiting at table had displeased him ;—there was laver on the table, called in Ireland sloak, which Mrs. Whiteway was fond of ; the Dean had tasted and disliked it, but said nothing, till about to reprove the man, when he broke out with "you-you-you worse than sloak." Sometimes he chose to mix in the mirth of his domestics. Once finding that his housekeeper, Mrs. Ridgeway, had, according to custom, on his birth-day, made an entertainment for the neighbours, he requested to know at whose expense the treat was provided, and understanding that he himself was the founder of the feast, he sat down among the guests, and partook of their cheer with great good humour. Upon another occasion, he and some friends resolved to celebrate a classical Saturnalia at the deanery, and actually placed their servants at table while they themselves attended on them. The butler, who represented the Dean, acted his master to the life. He sent Swift to the cellar in quest of some particular wine, then affected to be discontented with the wine he brought, and commanded him to bring another sort. The Dean submissively obeyed, took the bottle to the sideboard and decanted it, while the butler still abused him in his own style, and charged him with reserving some of the grounds for his own drinking. The Dean, it was observed, did not altogether relish the jest, but it was carried on as long as it gave amusement ; when the tables were removed, the scene reversed, an entertainment served up to the proper guests, and everything conducted by the very servants who had partaken of the Saturnalia, in an orderly and respectful manner.* These anecdotes serve to show that the Dean took a particular pleasure in observing this class of society, and explain the extraordinary insight which he had obtained into their habits and character. The "Instructions to Servants" form only a fragment. The Dean had intended a more regular work, but indisposition interrupted his labours. In 1738 and 1739, he expresses by repeated inquiries at Faulkner, some anxiety about a part of the manuscript. It was not, however, published until after his death. This is almost the last literary subject in which Swift seems to have been interested.

"He was dining one day in the country, and at going away the servant of the family brought him his horse. As the man held the horse, the Dean called to his own man, and asked him whether it would not be proper to give something to the servant for his trouble? The man assented, and the Dean asked him what he thought would be proper to give the man, and whether half a crown was too much? 'No, sir!'—'Very well,' replied Swift, and gave the man the half crown. When the board-wages of the week came to be paid, he stopped the half crown, and reads his servant a lecture ; telling him, it was his duty to attend him, and not to leave him to the care of others ; that he brought him to the house, that he might not give trouble to others ; and pressed his argument by supposing he would not in future be quite so generous of his master's money."

* This anecdote is given by Mr. Theophilus Swift, on the authority of Mrs. Whiteway.

We return to the private life of Swift subsequent to 1732. The incidents are short and melancholy. For a while his correspondence with Pope, Bolingbroke, Gay, and the Duchess of Queensberry, Gay's lively and spirited patroness, sustained his connexion with England. Bolingbroke attempted, so late as 1732, to negotiate an exchange of his deanery with the living of Burfield in Berkshire. But it was too late. The sacrifice of dignity and income, considerable at any time, became impossible after the habits of nearly twenty years. The die was therefore cast, and Swift was to close his days in the country of his birth, not in that of his choice. Indeed, although his dislike to Ireland does not appear to have abated in its acrimony, his desire to exchange his residence there for an abode in England must have been gradually diminished, as in the language of the poet,

Tie after tie was loosened from his heart;

and when his remnant of life could only be spent in melancholy recollections of the past, or anxious anticipations of the future.

The sudden death of the kind-hearted and affectionate Gay was the first severe shock of this nature. Pope's letter announcing this event is indorsed by Swift, "Received December 15th, (1732,) but not read till the 20th, by an impulse foreboding some misfortune." The death of Arbuthnot followed in 1734-5. Swift thus expresses himself to Pope on the breaches thus made among their friends: "The death of Mr. Gay and the Doctor have been terrible wounds near my heart. Their living would have been a great comfort to me, although I should never have seen them; like a sum of money in a bank, from which I should receive at least annual interest, as I do from you, and have done from my Lord Bolingbroke. Lady Masham, the moving spring of Queen Anne's last administration and Swift's firm friend, died about the same period, and the Earl of Peterborough followed, in the year 1735. Bolingbroke and Pope remained; but the former seeing all his political hopes blighted, retired in disgust to France in 1734, and ill health on both sides gradually slackened Swift's intercourse with the Bard of Twickenham. But it is a false and malicious insinuation of the notorious Mrs. Pilkington, that there was any relaxation in the mutual regard of the illustrious friends; Lord Orrery, who had the best access to know, has given testimony, and produced proof, that their friendship remained sincere and perfect on both sides till closed by death. On the presentation copy of the Dunciad, with which she pretends the Dean was but little pleased, Swift has written *Auctoris Amicissimi Decum*,—an expression of superlative warmth.

The Dean's health was now gradually giving way under the pressure of age, and his recurring fits of deafness and giddiness. His judgment and powers of thought continued indeed clear during the intervals of his disorder; but his memory became imperfect, and his temper, always irritable, was now subject to violent and frantic fits of passion upon slight provocation. These inroads upon his faculties were precursors of the final disorder whose approach he had long dreaded. So early as

1717,* we are informed by Dr. Young, that, while walking with Swift about a mile out of Dublin, the Dean stopped short. "We passed on," says the author of the "Night Thoughts," "but perceiving he did not follow us, I went back and found him fixed as a statue, and earnestly gazing upward at a noble elm, which, in its uppermost branches, was much withered and decayed. Pointing at it, he said, 'I shall be like that tree, I shall die at the top.'" Orrery also informs us, that when the Dean, in conversation, dwelt upon the period of mental imbecility which closed the lives of Somers, Marlborough, and other distinguished contemporaries, it was never without a deep and anxious presage of his own fate. To the same feeling of internal decay may be traced his answer to a friend who mentioned some one as a fine old gentleman: "What!" said the Dean with violence, "have you yet to learn that there is no such thing as a fine old gentleman? If the man you speak of had either a mind or body worth a farthing, they would have worn him out long ago."†

It would be vain to inquire, whether this awful foreboding, becoming more terrible as its accomplishment approached nearer, influenced Swift in the disposal of his fortune; whether he took the hint of establishing a Lunatic Asylum from a letter of Sir William Fownes upon that subject; or whether, as he himself alleges,

> He gave the little wealth he had,
> To build a house for fools or mad,
> To show, by one satiric touch,
> No nation wanted it so much.

Such, however, was the resolution he formed, and it was his first intention to endow his purposed hospital with land to the extent of three hundred pounds per annum; but after in vain endeavouring to make such a purchase, and even advertising for that purpose, he at length suffered his fortune to remain upon the various mortgages in which it was vested, and left to his executors the trouble of collecting and investing it in land. Nor was he less anxious about the site of his intended hospital. In 1734-5, he presented a memorial to the

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* The date is assigned from Dr. Johnson's (or Mr. Croft's) probable conjecture that Dr. Young accompanied his witty and profligate patron, the Duke of Wharton, to Ireland in that year. When Wharton related some of his mischievous pranks to the Dean, (who really esteemed his talents), he made this remarkable answer, "Take a frolic to be virtuous, my lord; it will give you more pleasure than any you have yet tried." Delany has somewhat injured this anecdote, by substituting the word *honour* for *pleasure*. Swift has ridiculed Young's bombast in his simile upon that poet and Philips. But in the "Verses on Young's Satire," and in the "Rhapsody on Poetry," he seems rather to censure Young's politics than his talents.

† At one time he requested Mrs. Whiteway to mention to him any decay which she might observe in his faculties:—"No, sir," she replied; "I have read 'Gil Blas.'" A similar story is recorded by Mr. Sheridan of his father, who, (less prudent), complied with the request, and extorted from the Dean the question, 'Whether he had ever read 'Gil Blas.'"

corporation of Dublin, praying that a piece of ground on Oxmantown-green might be assigned for this purpose, which request was immediately complied with. In 1737, a mortmain act was in agitation, for preventing settlement of landed property upon the church, or upon public charities. The Dean presented a petition to the House of Lords to be excepted from this bill, in case it should pass into a law. The petition stated, that he had long since bequeathed his fortune to charitable uses for the benefit of the kingdom; and if the exception which he prayed for should not be granted, he would be under the necessity of remitting it abroad for the same pious and worthy purposes. The mortmain bill did not pass into a law, and the exception became unnecessary. From the repeated statement in these proceedings, that the Dean had long since settled his estate for the benefit of the intended foundation, it appears that his existing will, dated 3rd May, 1740, was not the first destination of his property. The funds which finally devolved upon the hospital, amounted to above ten thousand pounds, which was the sum of Swift's savings in the course of about thirty years.

The internal regulation of Swift's family had for some years been under the management of his kind and affectionate relation Mrs. Whiteway.* She was the daughter of Adam Swift, the Dean's uncle, and was the only relation to whom he ever showed any attachment; a distinction which she has been thought to owe to her not bearing the family name. It was a littleness in the mind of Swift, that the recollection of the parsimonious education he had received from his uncle Godwin mixed in almost every reflection which he turned towards his relatives. In his correspondence, he repeatedly declares his dislike to his own family, although he sometimes makes a cold exception in favour of Mr. Deane Swift,† the grandson of his uncle Godwin, and representative, though by that unpleasant link, of his favourite ancestor, Thomas, the loyal vicar of Goodrich. Even to this young gentleman the Dean extended no share of effectual patronage; and the only influence which his relationship produced upon his kinsman's fortunes was of an unfavourable nature. Mr. Deane Swift, however, paid the cold and reluctant courtesy of his illustrious relative

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* Hawkesworth erroneously, or injuriously, represented Mrs. Whiteway as the Dean's housekeeper. Nothing could be more incorrect. She was a lady of talents, fashion, and independent fortune, from whom the late Mr. Theophilus Swift inherited a considerable estate in the county of Limerick. Mrs. Whiteway was twice married. Her first husband was the Rev. Theophilus Harrison, Dean of Clenmacnoise. A daughter of this marriage married Mr. Deane Swift, and was the mother of my late obliging correspondent, to whom the reader, as well as the editor, is so much indebted.

† By a singular coincidence, this gentleman bore both the family name of the author and the clerical title by which he was universally distinguished. But he derived his Christian name of Deane from his grandmother, Miss Deane, daughter and heiress of Admiral Deane, who served the Parliament with éclat during the civil wars.

with the warmest attachment, and vindicated his memory, after death, from the charges of Lord Orrery. Yet how little he owed to his patronage, will appear from the following remarkable anecdote. Sir Robert Walpole offered Mr. Deane Swift preferment in the church, if he chose to take orders. Mr. Deane Swift was then considerably indebted to his distinguished kinsman; and, influenced also by his habits of attachment and respect, consulted him on the flattering proposal thus made to him. The Dean, indignant at the idea of his kinsman receiving any favour from Walpole, insisted on his rejecting the minister's proposal, but never took measures to compensate him for the injury which his fortunes thus sustained.* To account for this

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* It is proper to give this remarkable anecdote in the words of the late son and representative of Mr. Deane Swift.—"My father, having an easy fortune, had taken to no profession. He was an excellent scholar, but a very bad writer. No man of his day understood the Greek language better; and he was familiar with all the Oriental languages. He was a very moral man; and, from an innate love of religion, had made divinity his immediate study. He had taken a degree of A.M. at Oxford, and was in every respect qualified for an excellent divine. Walpole knew him, and one day sent for him. He went; and Walpole asked him, whether it was his intention to take orders? My father was then about twenty-seven years of age. He answered, he had no such design. Walpole then desired that he would think of it, and that he would provide for him in the church; and even went so far as to tell him, that, at a proper time, he would make him a bishop. Swift very soon heard of what had passed, and sent for my father, whom he asked concerning the truth of the fact. Swift soon perceived that Walpole designed to prefer his relation over his head; and that while the Dean could not make *himself* a bishop, no impediment stood in the way of people who bore his name. Swift remonstrated very strongly with my father, who did not choose to give up the prospects held out to him. But Swift was *absolute* on all occasions. Whatever he said or willed must be obeyed. Beside the respect that my father had for him, which approached almost to idolatry, he owed him 2500*l*., an immense sum in those days; his estates were mortgaged for it to the Dean. The Dean did not absolutely promise a remission of the debt, but signified in very indignant terms. that if he did not relinquish orders, he would always find him his enemy; but if he would give up the idea of orders, he (the Dean) would always be his friend, and would *provide for him in the state.* My father yielded; was not made a bishop; was not provided for by Swift, but put upon the shelf; left his son (myself) to pay the mortgage, with a long arrear of interest upon it; and all that my father received from him, to the value of a single farthing, as a favour, was that which may be read in the Dean's will. My father loved the Dean to an excess almost unparalleled; but I have often heard him say, that the Dean was the only enemy that, to his knowledge, he ever had in his life, with the exception of Delany. I know not whether I have clearly expressed myself about Walpole and my father; but I would sum it up with saying, that there was no particular friendship between Walpole and Mr. Deane Swift, and that their politics differed *toto cælo.* The motive of the minister was not to serve my father, but to mortify the Dean; the Dean knew it, and sacrificed my father to his spleen. This is the truth of the matter. But my father would have done honour to Walpole's choice."

The ingenious editor of the "Swiftiana" mentions, that as Swift disliked his relations, (on account, as he alleged, of their degeneracy from the loyal faith of the vicar of Goodrich); so they detested him, and distinguished him by the nickname of *Top of Kin.* Many of them had become rich, and were probably mortified by his avowed neglect of their claim to his notice as kinsmen.

extreme and unjust violence, it is proper to remember, that the Dean was now in a state of infirmity, when passion and prejudice had begun to obscure the fine sense and judgment which they at length altogether eclipsed. But to Mrs. Whiteway Swift was uniformly kind, and repaid with esteem and gratitude the assiduity with which she watched over his family affairs, his charities, and the management of his household, which must otherwise have been abandoned to menials and interested persons.

The acquaintance of the Earl of Orrery, who endeavoured, by his assiduous attention, to recommend himself to Swift during the latter part of his life, was less disinterested. The character of that noble author is now pretty generally understood. Proud, cold, and unamiable, in private life, he could stoop, where it was necessary for the purpose of attaining the character which he chiefly affected, that of a man of genius; and Berkeley happily remarked, that his lordship would have been such, had he known how to set about it. As a scaffolding for his ambitious desire of literary distinction, Lord Orrery rested much upon his interest with the Dean. He courted him by encomiastic verses, but without the fancy and power of Delany; and, contrary to the bent of his nature, even veiled his dignity so far as to imitate the facetious trifles of Sheridan, without possessing either his humour or facility. But these sacrifices were not without their object; and, in his celebrated "Remarks upon Swift's Life and Writings," the noble author seems to have sought indemnification for the homage he had constrained himself to pay to Swift while alive, and for the coldness with which his court had, it is said, been in some instances received.* The work unquestionably displays some talent, and preserves much of Swift that might not otherwise have been known. But the severity with which the Dean's failings were censured and recorded, is not only inconsistent with the friendship and deference which Orrery affected during his life, but, in many cases, deviates into inaccuracy† and exaggeration, and exceeds even the privilege of attack which might have been permitted to a professed but liberal enemy. It is some apology, though but a poor one, for the dark shades with which Orrery drew the character of his departed friend, that he had

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* The real cause of Lord Orrery's treatment of Swift originated in a letter that had been found unopened by Swift's executors among his papers. The letter was indorsed, "This will keep cold." Lord Orrery had also learned, that when he sent the paper-book to Swift on his birthday, the Dean, on reading the words, "Dear Swift," in the first line, exclaimed with great indignance at his familiarity, —"Dear Swift? Dear Swift? Boy! Boy! Pshaw! Pshaw! What does the boy mean? *Friend? Friend? Sincere Friend?* Fool! Boy Boy!"—Mrs. Whiteway, being present when these expressions were used, remarked that Lord Orrery's servant, who waited in the hall, might easily hear them. They were probably reported; and the slight which they indicate was not erased by the handsome letter which the Dean wrote to his lordship on the occasion.

† Lord Orrery first broached the figment that Swift might be the natural son of Sir William Temple, which was morally impossible.

never known Swift until the decline of life, marked, as it was, by the loss of those friends who rendered life supportable to him,—by the increase of infirmities and irritability,—and by the gradual declension of the powers of intellect.

A more sincere and disinterested friend of the Dean was the good-natured, light-hearted, and ingenious Sheridan. But of his society the Dean was in a great measure deprived. He had resigned his residence in Dublin about 1734, and retired to the free school at Cavan with a diminished income, but unbroken gaiety of heart and spirits. Mr. Sheridan has recorded an affecting circumstance, which happened while his father was on the point of removal. The Dean "happened to call in just at the time that the workmen were taking down the pictures and other furniture in the parlour; that parlour where for such a number of years he had passed so many happy hours. Struck with the sight, he burst into tears, and rushed into a dark closet, where he continued a quarter of an hour before he could compose himself. When it is considered that he was at that time verging on seventy, an age in which the heart generally is callous, and almost dead to the fine affections, there cannot be a stronger confutation of the charge made against him of his want of feeling; as I believe the instances are very rare of persons at that time of life capable of being so much moved by such an incident."

The Dean in the following year visited his friend in his new residence. The amusement of riddles and Anglo-latin verses was renewed, but the charm was lost. Mr. Sheridan describes Swift as having become moody, and prone to violent fits of passion, receiving with scorn the attentions offered him by the burgesses of Cavan, who came out in a body to meet him, and repaying them reluctantly with a niggard and sparing entertainment at the inn. Other instances occurred, at this unhappy period of his life, intimating the irritability of a temper which could no longer bear the slightest retort, even when seasoned by the wit which he used so much to admire. After two years' residence at Cavan, Dr. Sheridan, with disappointed hopes and an impaired fortune, sold his school and returned to Dublin. He resided for a short time at the deanery; but Swift was incapable either of giving or receiving consolation, or even of respecting the feelings of the attached friend of so many years. It is painful to record that they parted on bad terms, and that Sheridan died soon afterwards, without any reconciliation having taken place.

The Dean's solitary and unhappy situation was such as now exposed him to imposition, and even to insult. One Francis Wilson, a prebendary of his cathedral, who resided in the deanery, and had been named by Swift one of his executors, formed, it is said, a plan of availing himself of the weakness of the Dean's intellects, to get himself appointed sub-dean of St. Patrick's, and, after in vain attempting to intoxicate him, had recourse to measures of intimidation and personal violence. Wilson attempted to vindicate himself by an affidavit, in which he ascribes the disgraceful struggle, which certainly took place,

to a fit of frenzy on the Dean's part. But his account was not credited, more especially as he was supposed to have been guilty of acts of peculation while he was a guest at the deanery.* He was forbidden to return there, and died soon afterwards.

Mrs. Whiteway was Swift's chief guardian against such selfish and dangerous guests as this man. An altercation once took place between them, concerning some of those visitors, whom she knew to be worthless and low-minded, and observed to be gaining influence over the Dean. The dispute growing high, Mrs. Whiteway rose from her seat, and dropping an angry curtsey, said, "I'll leave you, sir, to your flatterers and sycophants;" and then left the house in anger, resolving not to return. For two days she kept her resolution; and in that time had more than a dozen visitors at her door, who inquired with great concern for her health, after the unhappy circumstance that had befallen her. The fact was, the Dean had gone round to his friends, and with a serious face deplored the misfortune that he himself had witnessed, that Mrs. Whiteway had suddenly been seized with a fit of madness, and had been taken home in a most distracted state of mind. When he thought the deception had sufficiently worked, he called, and making her a silent bow, sat down. Mr. Deane Swift was in the room; being at that time on a visit at Mrs. Whiteway's. The Dean conversed with him for about ten minutes, without interchanging a word or a look with Mrs. Whiteway. He then got up, looked kindly at Mrs. Whiteway, and turning to Mr. Swift, "*Half* this visit was to you, sir." In uttering the word *half*, he glanced his eye at Mrs. Whiteway, bowed to them both, and withdrew. Their cordiality was instantly renewed.

The last scene was now rapidly approaching, and the stage darkened ere the curtain fell. From 1736, downward, the Dean's fits of periodical giddiness and deafness had returned with violence; he could neither enjoy conversation, nor amuse himself with writing; and an obstinate resolution which he had formed not to wear glasses, prevented him from reading. The following dismal letter to Mrs. Whiteway, in 1740, is almost the last document which we possess of the celebrated Swift, as a rational and reflecting being. It awfully foretells the catastrophe which shortly after took place.

"I have been very miserable all night, and to-day extremely dear and full of pain. I am so stupid and confounded, that I cannot express the mortification I am under both in body and mind. All I can say is, that I am not in torture; but I daily and hourly expect it. Pray let me know how your health is, and your family. I hardly un-

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* The servants at the deanery told Mrs. Whiteway, that they observed Wilson usually brought with him an empty portmanteau, and carried it away filled with books.

derstand one word I write. I am sure my days will be very few; few and miserable they must be.

"I am, for those few days,

"Yours entirely,

"J. SWIFT.

"If I do not blunder, it is Saturday,
July 26, 1740."

His understanding having totally failed soon after these melancholy expressions of grief and affection, his first state was that of violent and furious lunacy. His estate was put under the management of trustees, and his person confided to the care of Dr. Lyons, a respectable clergyman, curate to the Rev. Robert King, Prebendary of Dunlavin, one of Swift's executors. This gentleman discharged his melancholy task with great fidelity, being much and gratefully attached to the object of his care.* From a state of outrageous frenzy,

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* The most minute account of this melancholy period is given by Dr. Delany. "In the beginning of the year 1741, his understanding was so much impaired, and his passions so greatly increased, that he was utterly incapable of conversation. Strangers were not permitted to approach him, and his friends found it necessary to have guardians appointed of his person and estate. Early in the year 1742, his reason was wholly subverted, and his rage became absolute madness. The last person whom he knew was Mrs. Whiteway; and the sight of her, when he knew her no longer, threw him into fits of rage so violent and dreadful, that she was forced to leave him; and the only act of kindness that remained in her power, was to call once or twice a week at the Deanery, inquire after his health, and see that proper care was taken of him. Sometimes she would steal a look at him when his back was towards her, but did not dare to venture into his sight. He would neither eat nor drink while the servants who brought him his provisions stayed in the room. His meat which was served up ready cut, he would sometimes suffer to stand an hour upon the table before he would touch it; and at last he would eat it walking; for during this miserable state of his mind, it was his constant custom to walk ten hours a day.

"In October, 1742, after this frenzy had continued several months, his left eye swelled to the size of an egg, and the lid appeared to be so much inflamed and discoloured, that the surgeon expected it would mortify; several large boils also broke out on his arms and his body. The extreme pain of this tumour kept him waking near a month, and during one week it was with difficulty that five persons kept him, by mere force, from tearing out his eyes. Just before the tumour perfectly subsided, and the pain left him, he knew Mrs. Whiteway, took her by the hand, and spoke to her with his former kindness: that day, and the following, he knew his physician and surgeon, and all his family, and appeared to have so far recovered his understanding and temper, that the surgeon was not without hopes he might once more enjoy society, and be amused with the company of his old friends. This hope, however, was but of short duration; for a few days afterwards he sunk into a state of total insensibility, slept much, and could not, without great difficulty, be prevailed on to walk across the room. This was the effect of another bodily disease, his brain being loaded with water. Mr. Stevens, an ingenious clergyman of his chapter, pronounced this to be the case during his illness, and upon opening his head it appeared that he was not mistaken; but though he

aggravated by severe bodily suffering, the illustrious Dean of St. Patrick's sunk into the situation of a helpless changeling. In the course of almost three years, he is only known to have spoken once or twice. At length, when this awful moral lesson had substituted from [illegible] until the 19th October, 1741, it pleased God to release the subject of these Memoirs from this calamitous situation. He died upon that day without a single pang, so gently, indeed, that his attendants were scarce aware of the moment of his dissolution.

It was then that the gratitude of the Irish showed itself in the full glow of national enthusiasm. The funeral was forgotten, during which their great patriot had been dead to the world, and he was wept and mourned, as if he had been called away in the full career of his public services. Young and old of all ranks surrounded the house, to pay the last tribute of sorrow and of affection. Locks of his hair were

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often entertained the Dean's friends and physicians than his small might be prepared and the water disengaged, no regard was paid to his opinion or advice.

"After the Dean had continued silent a whole year in this helpless state of infancy, his housekeeper went into his room on the 20th November in the morning, telling him that it was his birthday, and that bonfires and illuminations were preparing to celebrate it as usual; to this he immediately replied—'It is all folly, they had better let it alone.'

"He would often attempt to speak his mind, but could not recollect words to express his meaning; upon which he would shrug up his shoulders, shake his head, and sigh heavily. Among all kinds of smells, none affected him so much as the smell of a candle. It happened that a young girl, the daughter of his housekeeper's relation, blew out a candle in his chamber; at which he knit his brows, looked angry, and said, 'You are a little dirty slut!' He spoke no more of it; but seemed displeased with her the whole evening.

"Some other instances of short intervals of sensibility and reason, after his madness had ended in stupor, seem to prove that his disorder, whatever it was, had not destroyed, but only suspended the powers of his mind.

"He was sometimes visited by Mr. Deane Swift, a relation, and about Christmas, 1741, he seemed desirous to speak to him. Mr. Swift then told him he came to dine with him; and Mrs. Ridgeway, the housekeeper, immediately said, 'Will you give Mr. Swift a glass of wine, sir?' To this he made no answer, but showed he understood the question, by shrugging up his shoulders, as he had been used to do, when he had a mind a friend should spend the evening with him, and which was as much as to say 'you will ruin me in wine.' Soon after he again endeavoured, with a great deal of pain, to find words; but at last, after many efforts, not being able, he fetched a deep sigh, and was afterwards silent. A few months after this, upon his housekeeper's removing a knife, as he was going to cut in it, he shrugged up his shoulders, and said, 'I am what I am;' and, in about six minutes, repeated the same words two or three times.

"In the year 1744, he now and then called his servant by his name, and once attempted to speak to him, but not being able to express his meaning, he showed signs of much uneasiness, and at last said, 'I am a fool.' Once afterwards, as his servant was taking away his watch, he said, 'Bring it here;' and when the same servant was breaking a hard large coal, he said, 'That is a stone, you blockhead.'

"From this time he was perfectly silent, till the latter end of October, 1745; and then died without the least pang or convulsion, in the seventy-eighth year of his age."

so eagerly sought after, that Mr. Sheridan happily applies to the enthusiasm of the citizens of Dublin, the lines of Shakspeare,

> Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
> And dying mention it within their wills,
> Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
> Unto their issue. SHAKSPEARE.

The remains of Dean Swift were interred, agreeably to his directions, with privacy, in the great aisle of St. Patrick's Cathedral, where an inscription, composed by himself, records his exertions for liberty, and his detestation of oppression.

HIC DEPOSITUM EST CORPUS
JONATHAN SWIFT, S. T. P.
HUJUS ECCLESIÆ CATHEDRALIS
DECANI:
UBI SÆVA INDIGNATIO
ULTERIUS COR LACERARE NEQUIT.
ABI VIATOR,
ET IMITARE, SI POTERIS,
STRENUUM PRO VIRILI LIBERTATIS VINDICEM.
OBIIT ANNO (1745):
MENSIS (OCTOBRIS) DIE (19);
ÆTATIS ANNO (78).

CONCLUSION.

Person, Habits, and Private Character of Swift—His Conversation—His Reading—Apparent Inconsistencies in his Character—His Charity—His Talents for Criticism—Character of the Dean as a Poet—As a Prose Author.

SWIFT was in person tall, strong, and well made, of a dark complexion, but with blue eyes, black and bushy eyebrows, nose somewhat aquiline, and features which remarkably expressed the stern, haughty, and dauntless turn of his mind. He was never known to laugh, and his smiles are happily characterized by the well-known lines of Shakspeare. Indeed, the whole description of Cassius might be applied to Swift:

> He reads much,
> He is a great observer, and he looks
> Quite through the deeds of men.—
> Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
> As if he mock'd himself, and scorned his spirit
> That could be moved to smile at anything.

The features of the Dean have been preserved in several paintings, busts, and medals.* In youth, he was reckoned handsome; Pope

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* There is an excellent portrait of Dean Swift at the Deanery House, Dublin, painted by Bindon. A genius appears in the piece displaying a scroll, containing a Latin inscription, partly undecypherable, but which refers to the Dean's exertions in procuring for the church the grant of the first fruits and tenths. At the bottom of the canvas is the following inscription:—

EFFIGIEM HUJUS REV. ADMODUM VIRI JONATH. SWIFT, S. T. P. ECCLESIÆ CATH. S. PAT. DUB. DECANI. IN PERPETUUM HARUM ÆDIUM TOTIUS CLERI ET HUJUSCE PRÆCIPUE GENTIS DECUS, AMORIS ET OBSERVANTIÆ ERGO PINGI CURAVIT CAPITULUM SUUM.

PRÆSENTI TIBI MATUROS LARGIMUR HONORES,
NIL ORITURUM ALIAS, NIL ORTUM TALE FATENTES.

In the back distance, through the window, is seen in perspective the great western door of the cathedral of St. Patrick's, leading immediately to that aisle in which the illustrious patriot is interred. The tower, or steeple, is pre-eminently conspicuous, however minute this part of the drawing be. It is to be observed, that at the period the original painting was taken, the spire, which now completes that fine Gothic structure, had not been erected.

The frame is of black Irish oak, curiously and tastefully carved with a variety of emblematical figures, having at the bottom the arms of the Deanery and of Swift quartered in one scutcheon. The unfortunate taste of one of his successors caused this frame to be gilded. This picture should not be mentioned without recording the patriotic disinterestedness of Dean Cradoc, who, when a fire broke out at the Deanery-house, commanded those who assisted to leave their exertions to save his own property and books, until they had secured the picture of his renowned predecessor.

Another portrait, supposed to be one of the best likenesses in existence, and also

observed, that though his face had an expression of dulness, his eyes were very particular. They were as azure, he said, as the heavens, and had an unusual expression of acuteness. In old age, the Dean's countenance conveyed an expression which, though severe, was noble and impressive. He spoke in public with facility and impressive energy; and as his talents for ready reply were so well calculated for political debate, it must have increased the mortification of Queen Anne's ministers, that they found themselves unable to secure him a seat on the bench of Bishops. The government of Ireland dreaded his eloquence as much as his pen.

His manners in society were, in his better days, free, lively, and engaging, not devoid of peculiarities, but bending them so well to circumstances, that his company was universally courted. When age and infirmity had impaired the elasticity of his spirits and the equality of his temper, his conversation was still valued, not only on account of the extended and various acquaintance with life and manners, of which it displayed an inexhaustible fund, but also for the shrewd and satirical humour which seasoned his observations and anecdotes. This, according to Orrery, was the last of his powers which decayed; but the Dean himself was sensible that, as his memory failed, his stories were too often repeated. His powers of conversation and of humorous repartee were in his time regarded as unrivalled; but, like most who have assumed a despotic sway in conversation, he was sometimes silenced by unexpected resistance.* He was very fond of puns. Perhaps the appli-

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painted by Bindon, is the property of Dr. Hill of Dublin. The expression of the features differ in some respects from the picture in the Deanery, being rather of a deep and melancholy cast, than of the stern, harsh, and imperative character.

There is a portrait of Dean Swift at Howth Castle. It is a full length, painted by Bindon. He is represented in the clerical costume. To the left of the figure is seen the Temple of Fame in the background; on the Dean's right appears the genius of Ireland, extending a laurel-wreath, as about to crown the patriot; in his left hand he holds forth a scroll, on which is written, "The fourth Drapier's Letter." At his feet, on the right of the picture, lies bound the famous patentee *Woods*; he is depicted in agony. On a scroll is written "Woods' patent."

A full-length painting of the Dean, in his clerical habit, is placed in the theatre, or examination-hall, of Trinity College, Dublin. The head and figure, with some variation of attitude, appear to be copied from the oil painting at the Deanery-house. He is here represented as standing between two pillars; in the space between, in the background, is given a view of the steeple and spire of St. Patrick's.

In the museum of Trinity College, Dublin, there is a dark plaster bust, or cast, of Dean Swift. It is an impression taken from the mask, applied to the face after death. The expression of countenance is most unequivocally maniacal, and one side of the mouth (the left) horribly contorted downwards, as if convulsed by pain. It is engraved for Mr. Barrett's "Essay."

There is a marble bust of Dean Swift in the possession of Dr. Duke, Stephen's Green, Dublin.

* At an inn, seeing the cook-maid scraping a piece of mutton, he asked how many maggots she had got out of it. "Not so many as are in your head," answered the wench smartly. The Dean was angry, and complained to her mistress. On another occasion, he was silenced by a worthy citizen, Alderman Brown, who, having undergone his raillery in silence during the time of dinner, all of a sudden

cation of the line of Virgil to the lady who threw down with her mantua a Cremona fiddle, is the best ever was made:—

Mantua, væ miseræ nimium vicina Cremonæ!

The comfort which he gave an elderly gentleman who had lost his spectacles, was more grotesque. "If this rain continues all night, you will certainly recover them in the morning betimes:"

Nocte pluit tota—redeunt spectacula mane.

His pre-eminence in more legitimate wit is asserted by many anecdotes. A man of distinction, not remarkable for regularity in his private concerns, chose for his motto, *Eques haud male notus.* "Better known than trusted" was the Dean's translation, when some one related the circumstance.

Swift had an odd humour of making extempore proverbs. Observing that a gentleman, in whose garden he walked with some friends, seemed to have no intention to request them to eat any of the fruit, Swift observed, "It was a saying of his dear grandmother,

Always pull a peach
When it is within your reach;"

and helping himself accordingly, his example was followed by the whole company. At another time, he framed an "old saying and true" for the benefit of a person who had fallen from his horse into the mire:—

The more dirt,
The less hurt.

The man rose much consoled; but as he was a collector of proverbs himself, he wondered he had never before heard that used by the Dean upon the occasion. He threw some useful rules into rhyming adages;*

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raised his head from the plate, on observing Swift take apple-sauce to the wing of a duck, and exclaimed, "Mr. Dean, you eat your duck like a goose." At another time, he asked Kenny, a Carmelite priest, whom he met at Mrs. Whiteway's, "Why the Catholic church used pictures and images, when the church of England did not?"—"Because," answered the priest readily, "we are old housekeepers, and you are new beginners." Swift was so surprised and incensed that he left the room, and would not stay dinner, though he had come to Mrs. Whiteway's with that intention. But these instances of irritability occurred during the latter years of his life, when he could not endure contradiction.

* Sheridan quotes two of them. One of them was a direction to those who ride together through the water:

When through the water you do ride,
Keep very close, or very wide.

Another related to the decanting of wine:

First rack slow, and then rack quick,
Then rack slow till you come to the thick.

and indeed, as his Journal to Stella proves, had a facility in putting rhymes together on any trifling occasion, which must have added considerably to the flow and facility of his poetical compositions.

In his personal habits he was cleanly, even to scrupulousness. At one period of his life he was said to lie in bed till eleven o'clock, and think of wit for the day; but latterly he was an early riser. Swift was fond of exercise, and particularly of walking. And although modern pedestrians may smile at his proposing to journey to Chester, by walking ten miles a day; yet he is said to have taken this exercise too violently, and to a degree prejudicial to his health. He was also a tolerable horseman, fond of riding, and a judge of the noble animal, which he chose to celebrate, as the emblem of moral merit, under the name of Houyhnhnm. Exercise he pressed on his friends, particularly upon Stella and Vanessa, as a sort of duty; and scarce any of his letters conclude without allusion to it; especially as relating to the preservation of his own health, which his constitutional fits of deafness and giddiness rendered very precarious. His habit of body in other respects appears to have been indifferent, with a tendency to scrofula, which, perhaps, hastened his mental disorder.* But the immediate cause was the pressure of water upon the head, as appeared from the dissection after death.†

Of his learning we have already spoken; it seems to have been both extensive and useful, but not profoundly scholastic. Of modern languages, he spoke and wrote French with facility, and understood Italian. His Latin verses indicate an imperfect knowledge of prosody, and no great command of the language in which they are written. The poem called "Rupes Carberiæ," has, in particular, been severely criticised. It is seldom that Swift alludes to English literature; yet it is evident he had perused with attention those classics to which his name is now

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* During his residence at Cavan, he was tormented with an ulcerous shin, often mentioned in his letters; and in his Journal there is a minute, and rather disgusting account of an eruption upon his shoulder. He sent for a surgeon belonging to the barracks, when at Cavan, to dress his wound. The young man entered with fear and trembling, for all men stood in awe of the Dean. "Look ye, sir," said Swift, raising his leg from the stool on which it was extended, "my shin is very badly hurt; I have sent for you, and if you can cure it, by —— I'll advertise you. Here's five guineas for you, and you need look for no more; so cure me as fast as you can." The young man succeeded; and the Dean, who liked both his skill and his modesty, was kind to him, often asked him to dinner, and when the cure was completed, made him a compliment of five guineas more. In a letter to Mrs. Whiteway he says, the shin cost him but three guineas; the rest he probably set down to benevolence.

† Dr. King says, that about three years before his final decay, he observed he was affected by the wine which he drank after dinner, and that next day, on his complaining of his health, he took the liberty to tell him he was afraid he had drank too much wine. He was startled, and replied, that he always looked on himself as a very temperate man, and never exceeded the quantity his physician prescribed. "Now his physician," continued King, "never drank less than two bottles of claret after dinner." But it must be remembered that King himself was a strict water-drinker.

added. How carefully he had read Milton appears from his annotations on the "Paradise Lost," for the benefit of Stella. Chaucer appears also to have been his favourite, for I observe among his papers a memorandum of the oaths used in the "Canterbury Tales," classed with the personages by whom they are used. It appears from a note upon Mr. Todd's edition of Milton, that Swift was a peruser of the ancient romances of chivalry. But he never mentions the romances and plays of the period in which he lived, without expressing the most emphatic contempt. To the drama, particularly, he was so indifferent, that he never once alludes to the writings of Shakspeare, nor, wonderful to be told, does he appear to have possessed a copy of his works. After noticing this, it will be scarce held remarkable, that the catalogue of his library only contains the works of three dramatic authors, Ben Jonson, Wycherley, and Rowe, the two last being presentation copies from the authors, in 1700 and 1702. History and classical authors formed the Dean's favourite studies, and, during the decay of his faculties, his reading was almost entirely confined to Clarendon.

Swift loved the country, like most men of genius, but rather practised rural occupations than rural sports. At Quilca, Gaulstown, and Market-Hill, he delighted in acting as a sort of overseer or bailiff to those employed in improving the property of his friends, and he dwells fondly in his Journal on his plantations and canal at Laracor.

It does not appear from any part f his works, unless, perhaps, the Latin verses on the rocks of Carbery,* that he was an admirer of the beautiful or romantic in landscape; but he was a curious, though not a scientific, observer of any singular natural phenomena which came under his attention.

The humour of stubborn independence, which influenced the Dean's whole character, stamps it at first examination with a whole chain of paradoxes. A devout believer in the truths of Christianity, a constant observer of the rules of religion, and zealous even to slaying in the cause of the Church of England, Swift assumed an occasional levity of writing, speaking, and acting, which caused his being branded as an infidel, a contemner of public ordinances, and a scoffer of church-discipline. Nor was this all. A zealous friend of liberty in temporal politics, he acted during his whole life with the Tory party,—disliking Ireland† even to virulent prejudice, he was the first and most effectual vindicator of her rights and liberties; and, charitable and benevolent to the extreme limits of a moderate revenue, he lay under the reproach of avarice and parsimony. An admirer of paradoxes,

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* He lay down on his breast to view the precipice, and became so giddy (owing probably to his constitutional vertigo) that he durst not rise; and his two servants were forced to drag him back by the heels to some distance from the brink.

† The Dean disliked Ireland as a residence, not in itself, or with reference to the natural qualities of its inhabitants, but on account of its being subjected to a sort of subaltern oppression, equally degrading to the characters of those who inflicted and those who endured it.

like Dr. Fuller, might have found points in his history as well as opinions, capable of being placed in strong contrast. The first writer of his age was disgraced at college; the principal supporter of Queen Anne's last administration, whose interest had made many a prelate, was himself unable to attain that dignity; and he who in his writings exhibited a tone of the most bitter misanthropy, was in active life a steady patriot, a warm friend, and a bountiful patron. He had also this remarkable fate as a political writer, that, although his publishers were in four instances subjected to arrest and examination,—although large rewards were twice offered for discovery of the author of works generally and truly ascribed to him,—yet he never personally felt the grasp of power:

> For not a Judas could be found,
> To sell him for three hundred pound.*

Many of these apparent paradoxes arose from Swift's stern and unbending pride of temper, which rather contemned and avoided public applause, than studied to present his character under favourable colours to the general eye. Even his politeness assumed often a singular turn of cynicism, and much of his conduct in life reminds us of his favourite style of composition, that IRONY

> Which he was born to introduce,
> Refined it first, and showed its use.

From the same cause he often exhibited, in his first address, a sternness and bluntness of demeanour, which, detached from the mode in which he well knew how to repair the pain he had given, was harsh to his inferiors, and uncivil to those of higher rank. An anecdote which, though told by Mrs. Pilkington, is well attested, bears, that the last time he was in London he went to dine with the Earl of Burlington, who was then but newly married. The Earl being willing, it is supposed, to have some diversion, did not introduce him to his lady, nor mention his name. After dinner, said the Dean, "Lady Burlington, I hear you can sing; sing me a song." The lady looked on this unceremonious manner of asking a favour with distaste, and positively refused. He said, "She should sing, or he would make her. Why, madam, I suppose you take me for one of your poor English hedge-parsons; sing when I bid you." As the earl did nothing but laugh at this freedom, the lady was so vexed, that she burst into tears, and retired. His first compliment to her when he saw her again, was, "Pray, madam, are you as proud and as ill-natured now, as when I saw you last?" To which she answered, with great humour, "No, Mr. Dean; I'll sing for you, if you please." From which time he

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* In allusion to this circumstance, he once said, he was three times near being hanged, and that people supposed he could bring in the Pretender in his hand, and place on him the crown.

conceived great esteem for her. The Dean received with complaisance such praise as was delicately administered; but it belonged to his character to repel whatever was extravagant or coarse. When a friend professed to love Swift better than all his friends and relations, he said, "The man is a fool." And when Pope talked to him of a lady who admired him above all things, he replied, "Then I despise her heartily." In fact, he seems rather to have expected his friends to gratify him by implicit compliance with his humour, however whimsical, than by any verbal flattery, disguising perhaps from himself, that such servile compliance was the grossest sort of practical adulation.

Much attached to his own profession, he had a strong prejudice against the military* and the law. Yet it is probable he would have been a brave and distinguished soldier, and certain that he must have risen high at the bar, to which his talents were peculiarly adapted. His dislike to soldiers was probably heightened by his indifferent opinion of Marlborough and other general officers, who were zealous against the peace of Utrecht; and the disinclination of courts of law to countenance the tithe of agistment, seems greatly to have aggravated his dislike to that profession.

The Dean's temper, while he was its master, was strictly economical, but the reverse of avaricious. He gave to the uttermost of his power, but he suffered no advantage to be taken of him. This was for a time an obstacle to his popularity; for the vulgar are always inclined to praise an easy and indifferent temper, in preference even to liberality, when meted forth by the severe test of merit. But the Dean's real and discriminating charity aimed at a better reward than popular applause. Even in his latter years, when habits of economy had assumed the appearance of parsimony, they could not overcome his principle of benevolence. When he was extremely ill, he heard of the ruin of Mr. Ellis, a cabinet-maker, an industrious young man, newly married, by a casual fire. The Dean instantly gave Mrs. Whiteway twenty pounds for the use of the young couple, charging his friend to conceal the quarter from which the relief had been administered.

It is a well-known fact, that Swift, with the first five hundred pounds which he could call his own, instituted a fund for granting small loans to such industrious artisans and tradesmen as could find security for repaying the money by small weekly instalments; but insisting upon punctuality in these repayments, without which the fund must soon have been exhausted. Dr. Johnson, no friend to Swift's fame, has represented this circumstance in an unfavourable

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* Yet there were times when the Dean envied the military prerogative of using personal castigation. Seeing a drayman abusing his overloaded horse, he attacked the fellow with his whip, and gave him several blows, exclaiming at each stroke, "Oh, that I were a captain of horse!" On another occasion, he tells a squire with whom he had a violent dispute, "he heartily wished, to make him show his humility, his quarrel had rather been with a captain of dragoons than with the Dean of St. Patrick's." Perhaps the Dean on both occasions recollected King William's proposal to promote him in the army.

view, as if he "employed the catchpoll under the appearance of charity." Yet, no one knew better than Dr. Johnson the uselessness of vague and indiscriminate bounty, or the advantage of awakening the needy to habits of regular economy. It is more honourably reported, that many families of considerable respectability in Dublin owed the rise of their prosperity to assistance from this small fund; nor can it be doubted, that the practice of regularly saving a portion of weekly income, to repay the assistance thus afforded them, had more influence on their future fortune, than might have been derived from double the sum conferred as an eleemosynary gift.*

The Dean's views extended beyond the immediate relief of the poor, though he always carried about him a certain sum in different kinds of coin to be distributed to deserving objects. He chiefly laboured to place the mode of providing for them upon some permanent footing, which should at once render imposition difficult, and secure relief to the necessitous. On this subject he wrote several tracts. He also exercised a kind of police among the poor women who maintained themselves by selling flowers, fruit, and such articles of petty traffic. He had nicknames for many of them, according to their persons and occupations, as Flora, Cancerina, Stumpa-nympha, and so forth. It is said he was once interrupted in his office of censor of these petty dealers, by one of them who affected to mistake him for Higgins, a bustling, pragmatical clergyman of the time, who had made himself remarkable by the vehemence of his high-church politics. Swift liked the mistake so ill, that he was observed afterwards to avoid the street in which this woman kept her booth. In general, however, he neither met reply nor resistance, and as his authority was always exercised for the benefit of the public, so it was usually mingled with bounty towards his subjects.†

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* Of course, between the humour of the Dean and that of the inferior Irish some odd anecdotes occurred in the management of this fund. One old woman is said positively to have refused payment, because, as she said, the money had not luck with her since she had dealt with the church; and she became so vociferous in her complaints, that the Dean gave up his claim, fearing, as he said, she would meet him with an action of damages for having lent her the money that brought so many misfortunes with it. A cobbler who had been punctual in his first payment of a small instalment, had a tankard of ale by the Dean's orders. At his second payment, he requested the same refreshment, upon which the Dean, in a rage, ordered him to depart and let him see him no more; with which injunction the man punctually complied, glad no doubt to pay his debt so easily. Upon another occasion, it is said, that a person who wished to borrow a small sum of money, being asked by Swift whom he proposed as security? "I have none to offer," said the poor man, "excepting my faith in my Redeemer." Swift accepted the security, made the entry accordingly, with all formality, and declared, that none of his debtors was more punctual than this man.

† He was everywhere received by the common people with the most profound respect, and used to say they should subscribe forty shillings a-year to keep him in hats, so numerous were the bows which he received and regularly returned. Upon one occasion he made a ludicrous experiment on the public belief in his authority. A number of people having assembled round the deanery to see an

The exertions of his own life bear witness to the Dean's love of his country, and regard for literature; and one of his last public acts exhibited the interest which he took in the prosperity of the University of Dublin. These sentiments formed the basis on which he founded his friendships; for in his better days every individual whom he favoured was recommended either by learning or patriotism. And if, in some latter instances, his regard was less worthily conferred, it was when his situation exposed him to have the affectation of these qualities passed upon him for the reality. The steadiness of his friendship, and his readiness to discharge the duties which it imposed, at every risk of loss or danger to himself, has been already commemorated. His prejudices and antipathies were often too rashly adopted, and grounded in general upon reasons of political aversion. But Swift's mind was open to conviction, and, in most instances, when the ardour of controversy had subsided, he renewed the friendships it had broken off, or has spoken with candour and generosity of the objects of his satire. In two cases, however, he seems to have been implacable. His resentment outlived the faculties and the life of Marlborough, and attended his funeral with a satirical epitaph, which, however witty, dishonoured the writer more than the hero. Nor was he able to forbear a sarcasm against Steele, even in the "Rhapsody on Poetry," when death ought to have silenced resentment. In his latter and more evil days, he classed his friends into Ungrateful—Grateful—Indifferent—and Doubtful.

The same liberality distinguished him respecting criticism, whether he received it from others, or communicated his own remarks for their benefit. At Addison's suggestion (as we have already stated), in the short poem of "Baucis and Philemon," he struck out forty verses, added forty verses, and altered the same number. On another occasion, he puts a pamphlet into the hands of a clergyman belonging to his chapter, for the benefit of his remarks. The critic suggested two alterations, which he instantly adopted. When the work appeared, he became sensible that the passages were altered for the worse, and expressed to the Dean his regret that the alteration should have been suggested, and his surprise that he had acquiesced in them. "Sir," said Swift, "I considered that the passages were of no great consequence, and I made the alterations you desired without hesitation, lest, had I stood up in their defence, you might have imputed it to the vanity of an author unwilling to hear of his errors; and by this ready compliance, I hoped you would, at all times hereafter, be the more free in your remarks."

The same criticism to which he himself so readily deferred, he was willing to extend for the benefit of his friends, or of any young man of

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eclipse, Swift became tired of their noise, and commanded the crier to make proclamation that the eclipse was put off by command of the Dean of St. Patrick's. This extraordinary annunciation was received with great gravity, and was the means of dispersing the assembled star-gazers.

promising talent; and his friend Tickell has justly characterized him in this capacity :—

> "He too, from whom attentive Oxford draws
> Rules for just thinking, and poetic laws,
> To growing bards his learned aid shall lend,
> The strictest critic, and the kindest friend."

Of these criticisms, there are many specimens in his correspondence, in which his chastity of taste, and correctness of poetical ear, are eminently displayed. It sometimes happened, however, that when teazed for an opinion by those upon whom criticism would have been thrown away, he was unable to repress the causticity of his disposition. To one poet he returned his manuscript carefully folded up; assuring the author that he had gone through it with care, and struck out at least half the faults. The poor bard, impatient to profit by Swift's remarks, stopped under a gateway in his road homeward, and, opening the packet, discovered, to his infinite mortification, that the Dean had carefully blotted out every second line in his poem. With this whimsical expression of satirical humour, his conduct in the case of young Mr. Fitzherbert may be advantageously contrasted. This youth, expelled from his father's house by hard usage, applied to the Dean, as the general patron of the oppressed against public or domestic tyranny. He sent him some verses, with which Swift was pleased. The Dean not only wrote a most admirable letter of mingled intercession and remonstrance, but supplied the young man with money for relief of his immediate wants. He then waited upon the obdurate father, rebuked him for delaying to answer his letter, and extorted his consent that the young man should be sent to prosecute his medical studies at Leyden, with a suitable allowance.

As an AUTHOR, there are three peculiarities remarkable in the character of Swift. The first of these has been rarely conceded to an author, at least by his contemporaries. It is the distinguished attribute of ORIGINALITY, and it cannot be refused to Swift by the most severe critic. Even Johnson has allowed that perhaps no author can be found who has borrowed so little, or has so well maintained his claim to be considered as original. There was indeed nothing written before his time which could serve for his model, and the few hints which he has adopted from other authors bear no more resemblance to his compositions than the green flax to the cable which is formed from it.

The second peculiarity, which has indeed been already noticed, is his total indifference to literary fame. Swift executed his various and numerous works as a carpenter forms wedges, mallets, or other implements of his art, not with the purpose of distinguishing himself by the workmanship bestowed on the tools themselves, but solely in order to render them fit for accomplishing a certain purpose, beyond which they were of no value in his eyes. He is often anxious about the success of his argument, and angrily jealous of those who debate the principles and the purpose for which he assumes the pen, but he

evinces, on all occasions, an unaffected indifference for the fate of his writings, providing the end of their publication was answered. The careless mode in which Swift suffered his works to get to the public, his refusing them the credit of his name, and his renouncing all connexion with the profits of literature,* indicate his disdain of the character of a professional author.

The third distinguishing mark of Swift's literary character is, that, with the exception of history, (for his fugitive attempts in Pindaric and Latin verse are too unimportant to be noticed,) he has never attempted any style of composition in which he has not obtained a distinguished pitch of excellence. We may often think the immediate mode of exercising his talents trifling, and sometimes coarse and offensive; but his Anglo-latin verses, his riddles, his indelicate descriptions, and his violent political satires, are in their various departments as excellent as the subjects admitted, and only leave us room occasionally to regret that so much talent was not uniformly employed upon nobler topics.

As a poet, Swift's post is pre-eminent in the sort of poetry which he cultivated. He never attempted any species of composition, in which either the sublime or the pathetic were required of him. But in every department of poetry where wit is necessary, he displayed, as the subject chanced to require, either the blasting lightning of satire, or the lambent and meteor-like coruscations of frolicsome humour. His powers of versification are admirably adapted to his favourite subjects. Rhyme, which is a handcuff to an inferior poet, he who is master of his art wears as a bracelet. Swift was of the latter description; his lines fall as easily into the best grammatical arrangement, and the most simple and forcible expression, as if he had been writing in prose. The numbers and the coincidence of rhymes, always correct and natural, though often unexpected, distinguish the current of his poetical composition, which exhibits, otherwise, no mark of the difficulty with which these graces are attained. In respect of matter, Swift seldom elevates his tone above a satirical diatribe, a moral lesson, or a poem on manners; but the former are unrivalled in severity, and the latter in ease. Sometimes, however, the intensity of his satire gives to his poetry a character of emphatic violence, which borders upon grandeur. This is peculiarly distinguishable in the "Rhapsody on Poetry," which, according to Dr. King, he accounted his best satire, and surely with great justice. Yet this grandeur is founded, not on sublimity either of conception or expression, but upon the energy of both; and indicates rather ardour of temper, than power

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* In a letter to Pulteney, 12th May, 1735, the Dean says, "I never got a farthing for anything I writ except once, about eight years ago, and that by Mr. Pope's prudent management for me." This probably alludes to "Gulliver's Travels," for which Pope certainly obtained from the bookseller 300*l*. There may, however, be some question, whether this sum was not left at Pope's disposal as well as that which he got for the "Miscellanies," and which Swift abandoned to him.

of imagination. *Facit indignatio versus.* The elevation of tone arises from the strong mood of passion rather than from poetical fancy. When Dryden told Swift he would never be a poet, he only had reference to the "Pindaric Odes," where power of imagination was necessary for success. In the walk of satire and familiar poetry, wit, and knowledge of mankind, joined to facility of expression, are the principal requisites for excellence, and in these Swift shines unrivalled. "Cadenus and Vanessa" may be considered as Swift's *chef-d'œuvre* in that class of poems which is not professedly satirical. It is a poem on manners; and, like one of Marmontel's "Contes Moraux," traces the progress and involutions of a passion, existing between two persons in modern society, contrasted strongly in age, manners, and situation. Yet even here the satirical vein of Swift has predominated. We look in vain for depth of feeling or tenderness of sentiment; although, had such existed in the poet's mind, the circumstances must have called it forth. The mythological fable, which conveys the compliments paid to Vanessa, is as cold as that addressed to Ardelia or to Miss Floyd. It is, in short, a kind of poetry which neither affects sublimity nor pathos, but in which the graceful facility of the poet unites with the acute observation of the observer of human nature, to commemorate the singular contest between Cadenus and Vanessa, as an extraordinary chapter in the history of the mind.

The Dean's promptitude in composition was equal to his smoothness and felicity of expression. At Mr. Gore's, in the county of Cavan, he heard the lively air called the "Feast of O'Rourke," and, obtaining a literal translation of the original Irish song from the author, Mr. Macgowran, executed with surprising rapidity the spirited translation which is found in his works.

Of the general style of Swift's poems, Dr. Johnson has said, in language not to be amended—"They are often humorous, almost always light, and have the qualities which recommend such compositions, easiness and gaiety. They are, for the most part, what their author intended. The diction is correct, the numbers are smooth, and the rhymes exact. There seldom occurs a hard-laboured expression, or a redundant epithet; all his verses exemplify his own definition of a good style—they consist of 'proper words in proper places.'"

As an historian Swift is entitled to little notice. The "History of England" is an abridgment, written evidently in imitation of Paterculus, but without those advantages in point of information which rendered the Latin author valuable. The Dean abandoned his task, because, as he said, with a sort of smile, to Mr. Deane Swift, "I have found them all such a pack of rascals, I would have no more to say to them." His account of the "Four Last Years of Queen Anne" has little pretensions to the name of history; it is written with the feelings and prejudices of a party writer, and does not deserve to be separated from the "Examiners," and other political tracts, of which Swift was the author. The tendency and purpose of these various publications, as well as of the "Drapier's Letters," have already been illustrated.

But although his political treatises raised his fame when published, and are still read as excellent models of that species of composition, it is to his "Tale of a Tub," to the "Battle of the Books," to his moral romance of "Gulliver," and to his smaller, but not less exquisite satires upon men and manners, that Swift owes the extent and permanency of his popularity as an English classic of the first rank. In reference to these works, Cardinal Polignac, to whom Swift was well known, used the remarkable expression, *Qu'il avait l'esprit créateur*. He possessed, indeed, in the highest perfection, the wonderful power of so embodying and imaging forth "the shadowy tribes of mind," that the fiction of the imagination is received by the reader as if it were truth. Undoubtedly the same keen and powerful intellect, which could sound all the depths and shallows of active life, had stored his mind with facts drawn from his own acute observation, and thus supplied with materials the creative talent which he possessed; for although the knowledge of the human mind may be, in a certain extent, intuitive, and subsist without extended acquaintance with the living world, yet that acquaintance with manners, equally remarkable in Swift's productions, could only be acquired from intimate familiarity with the actual business of the world.

In fiction he possessed, in the most extensive degree, the art of verisimilitude;—the power, as we observed in the case of "Gulliver's Travels," of adopting and sustaining a fictitious character, under every peculiarity of place and circumstance. A considerable part of this secret rests upon minuteness of narrative. Small and detached facts form the foreground of a narrative when told by an eye-witness. They are the subjects which immediately press upon his attention, and have, with respect to him as an individual, an importance, which they are far from bearing to the general scene in which he is engaged; just as a musket-shot, passing near the head of a soldier, makes a deeper impression on his mind, than all the heavy ordnance which has been discharged throughout the engagement. But to a distant spectator all these minute incidents are lost and blended in the general current of events; and it requires the discrimination of Swift, or of De Foe, to select, in a fictitious narrative, such an enumeration of minute incidents as might strike the beholder of a real fact, especially such a one as has not been taught, by an enlarged mind and education, to generalize his observations. I am anticipated in a sort of parallel which I intended to have made between the romances of "Gulliver" and "Robinson Crusoe" by the ingenious author of the "History of Fiction," whose words I adopt with pleasure, as expressing an opinion which I have been long induced to hold. After illustrating his proposition, by showing how Crusoe verifies his narrative of a storm, through means of a detail of particular incidents, he proceeds:—"Those minute references immediately lead us to give credit to the whole narrative, since we think they would hardly have been mentioned unless they had been true. The same circumstantial detail of facts is remarkable in 'Gul-

liver's Travels,' and we are led on by them to a partial belief in the most improbable narrations."*

The genius of De Foe has never been questioned, but his sphere of information was narrow; and hence his capacity of fictitious invention was limited to one or two characters. A plain sailor, as Robinson Crusoe,—a blunt soldier, as his supposed Cavalier,—a sharper in low life, like some of his other fictitious personages, were the only disguises which the extent of his information permitted him to assume. In this respect he is limited, like the sorcerer in the Indian tale, whose powers of transformation were confined to assuming the likeness of two or three animals only. But Swift seems, like the Persian dervise, to have possessed the faculty of transfusing his own soul into the body of any one whom he selected;—of seeing with his eyes, employing every organ of his sense, and even becoming master of the powers of his judgment. Lemuel Gulliver the traveller, Isaac Bickerstaff the astrologer, the Frenchman who writes the new journey to Paris, Mrs. Harris, Mary the cook-maid, the grave projector who proposes a plan for relieving the poor by eating their children, and the vehement Whig politician who remonstrates against the enormities of the Dublin signs, are all persons as distinct from each other as they are in appearance from the Dean of St. Patrick's. Each maintains his own character, moves in his own sphere, and is struck with those circumstances which his situation in life, or habits of thinking, have rendered most interesting to him as an individual.

The proposition I have ventured to lay down, respecting the art of giving verisimilitude to a fictitious narrative, has a corollary resting on the same principles. As minute particulars, pressing close upon the observation of the narrator, occupy a disproportionate share of his narrative and of his observation, so circumstances more important in themselves, in many cases, attract his notice only partially, and are therefore but imperfectly detailed. In other words, there is a distance as well as a foreground in narrative, as in natural perspective, and the scale of objects necessarily decreases as they are withdrawn from the vicinity of him who reports them. In this particular, the art of Swift is equally manifest. The information which Gulliver acquires from hearsay, is communicated in a more vague and general manner than that reported on his own knowledge. He does not, like other voyagers into Utopian realms, bring us back a minute account of their laws and government, but merely such general information upon these topics, as a well-informed and curious stranger may be reasonably supposed to acquire, during some months' residence in a foreign country. In short, the narrator is the centre and main-spring of the story, which neither exhibits a degree of extended information, such as circumstances could not permit him to acquire, nor omit those minute incidents, which the

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* Dunlop's History of Fiction.

same circumstances rendered of importance to him, because immediately affecting his own person.

Swift has the more easily attained this perfection of fictitious narrative, because in all his works of whatever description, he has maintained the most undeviating attention to the point at issue. What Mr. Cambridge has justly observed of the "Battle of the Books," is equally true as a general characteristic of Swift's writings; whoever examines them will find, that, through the whole piece, no one episode or allusion is introduced for its own sake, but every part appears not only consistent with, but written for the express purpose of strengthening and supporting, the whole.

Upon the style of Swift, Dr. Johnson has made the following observations, which are entitled to great weight from the learning and character of the critic. It is, however, to be considered, that the author of the "Rambler" may be supposed in some degree to undervalue a structure of composition, so strikingly opposed to his own, and that Dr. Johnson, as has already been observed, appears to have been unfriendly to the memory of Dean Swift.*

"In his works he has given very different specimens both of sentiments and expression. His 'Tale of a Tub' has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction, such as he afterward never possessed, or never exerted. It is of a mode so distinct and peculiar, that it must be considered by itself; what is true of that, is not true of anything else which he has written.

"In his other works is found an equable tenor of easy language, which rather trickles than flows. His delight was in simplicity. That he has in his works no metaphor, as has been said, is not true; but his few metaphors seem to be received rather by necessity than choice.

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* When employed in writing the Dean's life, Dr. Johnson received two invitations from Deane Swift, Esq., to spend some time at his house in Worcestershire, one of which was conveyed by Mr. Theophilus Swift, his son, to whom I owe this information. The purpose was to make every communication in his power, that might throw light on the history of his great and beloved relative. But Dr. Johnson declined the invitation, and even refused to receive the information offered, or to communicate with Mr. Deane Swift upon the subject. It would be difficult to assign a motive for the prejudice against Swift, so obvious in Dr. Johnson's conduct on this occasion, as well as in many passages of his life of the Dean, especially considering that these great men coincided in political sentiments. There is a letter from Earl Gower to some friend of Swift, dated 1st August, 1738, in which he endeavours to secure the Dean's interest for the purpose of procuring for Johnson the degree of Master of Arts in the University of Dublin, in order to render him eligible to be teacher of a charity-school at Appleby. The Dean may have refused or neglected this application. The late Bishop of Dromore, who had many opportunities of personal observation, was of opinion, that Dr. Johnson's dislike to Swift arose from the Dean's having opposed Dr. Madden's scheme for distributing prizes in Trinity College. It must be remembered that Dr. Johnson himself revised Madden's poem on the death of Boulter. Yet certainly it is unlikely that, so late as 1742, when that primate died, the Dean should have publicly interested himself in the affairs of the university.

He studied purity; and though perhaps all his strictures are not exact, yet it is not often that solecisms can be found; and whoever depends on his authority may generally conclude himself safe. His sentences are never too much dilated, or contracted; and it will not be easy to find any embarrassment in the complication of his clauses, any inconsequence in his connexions, or abruptness in his transitions.

"His style was well suited to his thoughts, which are never subtilized by nice disquisitions, decorated by sparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious sentences, or variegated by far-sought learning. He pays no court to the passions; he excites neither surprise nor admiration; he always understands himself, and his readers always understand him. The peruser of Swift wants little previous knowledge; and it will be sufficient that he is acquainted with common words and common things; he is neither required to mount elevations, nor to explore profundities; his passage is always on a level, along solid ground, without asperities, without obstruction."

The general character of Swift has been excellently drawn by the learned and candid Granger, with which I request permission to close these memoirs:

"Jonathan Swift was blessed in a higher degree than any of his contemporaries, with the powers of a creative genius. The more we dwell upon the character and writings of this great man, the more they improve upon us: in whatever light we view him, he still appears to be an original. His wit, his humour, his patriotism, his charity, and even his piety, were of a different cast from those of other men. He had in his virtues few equals, and in his talents no superior. In that of humour, and more especially in irony, he ever was, and probably ever will be, unrivalled. He did the highest honour to his country by his parts, and was a great blessing to it by the vigilance and activity of his public spirit. His style, which generally consists of the most naked and simple terms, is strong, clear, and expressive; familiar, without vulgarity or meanness; and beautiful, without affectation or ornament. He is sometimes licentious in his satire; and transgresses the bounds of delicacy and purity. He, in the latter part of his life, availed himself of the privilege of his great wit to trifle; but when, in this instance, we deplore the misapplication of such wonderful abilities, we at the same time admire the whims, if not the dotages, of a Swift. He was, perhaps, the only clergyman of his time, who had a thorough knowledge of men and manners. His 'Tale of a Tub,' his 'Gulliver's Travels,' and his 'Drapier's Letters,' are the most considerable of his prose works; and his 'Legion Club,' his 'Cadenus and Vanessa,' and his 'Rhapsody on Poetry,' are at the head of his poetical performances. His writings, in general, are regarded as standing models of our language, as well as perpetual monuments of their author's fame."

ANECDOTES OF THE FAMILY OF SWIFT.

A FRAGMENT.—WRITTEN BY DR. SWIFT.

[*The original Manuscript, in his own hand, is lodged in the University Library of Dublin.*]

THE family of the Swifts was ancient in Yorkshire; from them descended a noted person, who passed under the name of Cavaliero *Swift*, a man of wit and humour. He was made an Irish Peer by King James or King Charles the First, with the title of Baron *Carlingford*,* but never was in that kingdom. Many traditional pleasant stories are related of him, which the family planted in Ireland had received from their parents. This lord died without issue male; and his heiress, whether of the first or second descent, was married to *Robert Fielding*, Esquire, commonly called *Handsome Fielding*; she brought him a considerable estate in Yorkshire, which he squandered away, but had no children; the Earl of Eglinton married another coheiress of the same family, as he has often told me.†

Another of the same family was Sir *Edward Swift*, well known in the times of the great rebellion and usurpation, but I am ignorant whether he left heirs or not.

Of the other branch, whereof the greatest part settled in Ireland, the founder was *William Swift*, prebendary of Canterbury,‡ towards the last years of Queen Elizabeth, and during the reign of King James the First. He was a divine of some distinction. There is a sermon of his extant, and the title is to be seen in the catalogue of the Bodleian Library, but I never could get a copy, and I suppose it would now be of little value.§

This William married the heiress of *Philpott*, I suppose a Yorkshire‖ gentleman, by whom he got a very considerable estate, which, however,

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* *Barnam Swift*, Esq., was created Viscount (not Baron) of Carlingford, by King Charles I. March 20, 1627, and by his death in 1642, S. P. the title became extinct.

† Scottish genealogists do not record such a marriage in the pedigree of the Eglintoun family,

‡ William Swift was rector of St. Andrew's, in Canterbury, not a prebendary.

§ It was preached Jan. 25, 1621, at St. George's, Canterbury, at the funeral of Sir Thomas Wilson, in Rom. viii. 18, and is written much in the style and manner of that age.—D.S.

‖ More probably of Kent.—D. S.

she kept in her own power; I know not by what artifice. She was a capricious, ill-natured, and passionate woman, of which I have been told several instances. And it has been a continual tradition in the family, that she absolutely disinherited her only son *Thomas*, for no greater crime than that of robbing an orchard when he was a boy. And thus much is certain, that except a church or chapter lease which was not renewed, Thomas never enjoyed more than one hundred pounds a-year, which was all at Goodrich, in Herefordshire, whereof not above one half is now in the possession of a great grandson.

His original picture* is now in the hands of *Godwin Swift*, of Dublin, Esq., his great grandson, as well as that of his wife, who seems to have a good deal of the shrew in her countenance;† whose arms of an heiress are joined with his own; and by the last he seems to have been a person somewhat fantastic; for in these he gives as his device, a dolphin (in those days called a Swift) twisted about an anchor, with this motto, *Festina lente*.

There is likewise a seal with the same coat of arms, (his not joined with his wife's,) which the said William commonly made use of, and this is also now in the possession of Godwin Swift above mentioned.

His eldest son *Thomas* seems to have been a clergyman before his father's death. He was vicar of Goodrich, in Herefordshire, within a mile or two of Ross; he had likewise another church living, with about one hundred pounds a-year in land, as I have already mentioned. He built a house on his own land in the village of Goodrich, which, by the architecture, denotes the builder to have been somewhat whimsical and singular, and very much toward a projector. The house is above a hundred years old, and still in good repair, inhabited by a tenant of the female line, but the landlord, a young gentleman, lives upon his own estate in Ireland.‡

This Thomas was distinguished by his courage, as well as his loyalty to King Charles the First, and the sufferings he underwent for that prince, more than any person of his condition in England. Some historians of those times relate several particulars of what he acted, and what hardships he underwent for the person and cause of that blessed martyred prince. He was plundered by the Roundheads six-and-thirty times, some say above fifty. He engaged his small estate, and gathered all the money he could get, quilted it in his waistcoat, got off to a town held for the king, where being asked by the governor, who

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* Drawn in 1603, æt. 57: his wife's in the same year, æt. 54.—D. S.

† These pictures are still preserved in the family.

‡ This house, now the property of Mr. Theophilus Swift, is still standing. A vault is shown beneath the kitchen, accessible only by raising one of the flag-stones Here were concealed the provisions of bread and milk, which supported the lives of the family after they had been plundered by the Parliamentary soldiers. The vicar was in those days considered as a conjuror, especially when, his neighbours being discharged from assisting him, and all his provisions destroyed, he still continued to subsist his family. This vault is probably one of the peculiarities of architecture noticed by the Dean.

knew him well, "what he could do for his majesty?" Mr. Swift said, 'he would give the king his coat," and stripping it off, presented it to the governor; who observing it to be worth little, Mr. Swift said, "then take my waistcoat:" he bid the governor weigh it in his hand, who, ordering it to be ripped, found it lined with three hundred broad pieces of gold, which, as it proved a seasonable relief, must be allowed an extraordinary supply from a private clergyman with ten children, of a small estate, so often plundered, and soon after turned out of his livings in the church.

At another time, being informed that three hundred horse of the rebel party, intended in a week to pass over a certain river, upon an attempt against the Cavaliers, Mr. Swift having a head mechanically turned, he contrived certain pieces of iron with three* spikes, whereof one must always be with the point upward; he placed them over night in the ford, where he received notice that the rebels would pass early the next morning, which they accordingly did, and lost two hundred of their men, who were drowned or trod to death by the falling of their horses, or torn by the spikes.

His sons, whereof four were settled in Ireland, (driven thither by their sufferings, and by the death of their father,) related many other passages, which they learned either from their father himself, or from what had been told them by the most credible persons of Herefordshire, and some neighbouring counties: and which some of those sons often told to their children; many of which are still remembered, but many more forgot.

He was deprived of both his church livings sooner than most other loyal clergymen, upon account of his superior zeal for the king's cause, and his estate sequestered. His preferments, at least that of Goodrich, were given to a fanatical saint, who scrupled not, however, to conform upon the Restoration, and lived many years, I think till after the Revolution: I have seen many persons at Goodrich, who knew and told me his name, which I cannot now remember.

The lord-treasurer Oxford told the Dean, that he had among his father's (Sir Edward Harley's) papers, several letters from Mr. Thomas Swift, writ in those times, which he promised to give to the grandson, whose life I am now writing; but never going to his house in Herefordshire while he was treasurer, and the queen's death happening in three days after his removal, the Dean went to Ireland, and the earl being tried for his life, and dying while the Dean was in Ireland, he could never get them.

Mr. Thomas Swift died in the year 1658, and in the 63rd year of his age; his body lies under the altar at Goodrich, with a short inscription.† He died about two years before the return of King

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* It should be four.—S.

† This was erected by the Dean, and was the subject of some pleasantry between Pope and him. At the same time the Dean gave a chalice to the church of Goodrich.

Charles the Second, who, by the recommendation of some prelates, had promised, if ever God should restore him, that he would promote Mr. Swift in the church, and otherwise reward his family, for his extraordinary services and zeal, and persecutions in the royal cause; but Mr. Swift's merit died with himself.

He left ten sons and three or four daughters, most of which lived to be men and women: his eldest son, *Godwin Swift*, of the Inner Temple, Esq. (so styled by Guillim the herald, in whose book the family is described at large,) was, I think, called to the bar before the Restoration. He married a relation of the old Marchioness of Ormond, and upon that account, as well as his father's loyalty, the old Duke of Ormond made him his attorney-general in the palatinate of Tipperary. He had four wives, one of which, to the great offence of his family, was co-heiress to Admiral *Deane*, who was one of the regicides. Godwin left several children, who have all estates. He was an ill pleader, but perhaps *a little too** dexterous in the subtle parts of the law.

The second son of Mr. *Thomas Swift* was called by the same name, was bred at Oxford, and took orders. He married the eldest daughter of Sir *William d'Avenant*, but died young, and left only one son, who was also called *Thomas*, and is now rector of Putenham in Surrey. His widow lived long, was extremely poor, and in part supported by the famous Dr. South, who had been her husband's intimate friend.

The rest of his sons, as far as I can call to mind, were Mr. *Dryden* Swift, called so after the name of his mother, who was a near relation to Mr. Dryden the poet, *William*, *Jonathan*, and *Adam*, who all lived and died in Ireland; but none of them left male issue except *Jonathan*, who, beside a daughter, left one son, born seven months after his father's death, of whose life I intend to write a few memorials.

J. S., D.D. and D. of St. P——, was the only son of Jonathan Swift, who was the seventh or eighth son of Mr. Thomas Swift above-mentioned, so eminent for his loyalty and his sufferings.

His father died young, about two years after his marriage; he had some employments and agencies; his death was much lamented on account of his reputation for integrity, with a tolerable good understanding.

He married Mrs. *Abigail Erick*,† of Leicestershire, descended from

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* These three words were interlined in the original, some time after it was first written, and were designed by the Doctor to be a sneer upon the memory of his uncle.—D. S.

† This lady had much of her celebrated son's peculiar humour. She came to visit him after he was settled at Laracor, and lodged with Mr. Brent, a printer in George's Lane, Dublin, husband of the person who was afterwards the Dean's housekeeper, and who is commemorated by him in the laughable verses, beginning—

Dingley and Brent,
Wherever they went, &c.

Mrs. Swift, who had probably discovered the gossiping temper of her laud-

the most ancient family of the Ericks, who derive their lineage from Erick the Forester, a great commander, who raised an army to oppose the invasion of William the Conqueror, by whom he was vanquished, but afterward employed to command that prince's forces; and in his old age retired to his house in Leicestershire, where his family has continued ever since, but declining every age, and are now in the condition of very private gentlemen.*

This marriage was on both sides very indiscreet, or his wife brought her husband little or no fortune; and his death happening so suddenly, before he could make a sufficient establishment for his family, his son (not then born) hath often been heard to say, that he felt the consequences of that marriage, not only through the whole course of his education, but during the greatest part of his life.

He was born in Dublin, on St. Andrew's day; and when he was a year old, an event happened to him that seems very unusual; for his nurse, who was a woman of Whitehaven, being under an absolute necessity of seeing one of her relations, who being then extremely sick, and from whom she expected a legacy; and being extremely fond of the infant, she stole him on shipboard unknown to his mother and uncle, and carried him with her to Whitehaven, where he continued for almost three years. For, when the matter was discovered, his mother sent orders by all means not to hazard a second voyage, till he could be better able to bear it. The nurse was so careful of him, that before he returned he had learned to spell; and by the time that he was five years old he could read any chapter in the Bible.

After his return to Ireland, he was sent at six years old to the school of Kilkenny, from whence, at fourteen, he was admitted into the university at Dublin; where, by the ill treatment of his nearest relations, he was so much discouraged and sunk in his spirits, that he too much neglected some parts of his academic studies; for which he had no great relish by nature, and turned himself to reading history and poetry: so that, when the time came for taking his degree of bachelor, although he had lived with great regularity and due observance of the statutes, he was stopped of his degree for dulness and insufficiency; and at last hardly admitted, in a manner little to his credit, which is called in that college *speciali gratiâ*. And this discreditable mark, as I am told, stands upon record in their college registry.

The troubles then breaking out, he went to his mother, who lived in Leicester; and after continuing there some months, he was received

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lady, amused her credulity by pretending she had come to Ireland to receive the addresses of a lover, and under that character received her son Jonathan's first visit, before she acquainted Mrs. Brent with the trick she had put upon her curiosity.

* The family of *Erick*, which has produced many eminent men, is still represented by two respectable branches, the *Heyricks* of Leicester town, and the *Herricks* of Beaumanor. Of both these branches, distinct pedigrees and many curious historical anecdotes are given in the "History of Leicestershire."

by Sir William Temple, whose father had been a great friend to the family, and who was now retired to his house called Moor-Park, near Farnham in Surrey, where he continued for about two years: for he happened, before twenty years old, by a surfeit of fruit, to contract a giddiness and coldness of stomach, that almost brought him to his grave; and this disorder pursued him with intermissions of two or three years to the end of his life. Upon this occasion he returned to Ireland, by advice of physicians, who weakly imagined that his native air might be of some use to recover his health: but growing worse, he soon went back to Sir William Temple; with whom, growing into some confidence, he was often trusted with matters of great importance. King William had a high esteem for Sir William Temple by a long acquaintance, while that gentleman was ambassador and mediator of a general peace at Nimeguen. The king, soon after his expedition to England, visited his old friend often at Sheen, and took his advice in affairs of greatest consequence. But Sir William Temple, weary of living so near London, and resolving to retire to a more private scene, bought an estate near Farnham in Surrey, of about 100*l.* a year, where Mr. Swift accompanied him.

About that time a bill was brought into the House of Commons for triennial parliaments; against which the king, who was a stranger to our constitution, was very averse, by the advice of some weak people, who persuaded the Earl of Portland that King Charles the First lost his crown and life by consenting to pass such a bill. The earl, who was a weak man, came down to Moor-Park, by his majesty's orders, to have Sir William Temple's advice, who said much to show him the mistake. But he continued still to advise the king against passing the bill. Whereupon Mr. Swift was sent to Kensington with the whole account of the matter in writing, to convince the king and the earl how ill they were informed. He told the earl, to whom he was referred by his majesty, (and gave it in writing,) that the ruin of King Charles the First was not owing to his passing the triennial bill, which did not hinder him from dissolving any parliament, but to the passing of another bill, which put it out of his power to dissolve the parliament then in being, without the consent of the house. Mr. Swift, who was well versed in English history, although he was then under twenty-one years old, gave the king a short account of the matter, but a more large one to the Earl of Portland, but all in vain; for the king, by ill advisers, was prevailed upon to refuse passing the bill.* This was the first time that Mr. Swift had any converse with courts, and he told his friends it was the first incident that helped to cure him of vanity. The consequence of this wrong step in his majesty was very unhappy; for it put that prince under a necessity of introducing those people called Whigs into power and employments, in order to pacify them. For, although it be held a part of the king's prerogative to refuse

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* This happened in the year 1693, when the bill for triennial parliaments was rejected, not by the king, but by the House of Commons.

passing a bill, yet the learned in the law think otherwise, from that expression used at the coronation, wherein the prince obliges himself to consent to all laws, *quas vulgus elegerit.*

Mr. Swift lived with him (Sir William Temple) some time, but resolving to settle himself in some way of living, was inclined to take orders. However, although his fortune was very small, he had a scruple of entering into the church merely for support, and Sir William Temple, then being master of the rolls in Ireland, offered him an employ of about 120*l.* a-year in that office; whereupon Mr. Swift told him, that since he had now an opportunity of living without being driven into the church for a maintenance, he was recommended to the Lord Capel, then Lord Deputy, who gave him a prebend in the north, worth about 100*l.* a-year, of which growing weary in a few months, he returned to England, resigned his living in favour of a friend, and continued in Sir William Temple's house till the death of that great man, who, besides a legacy, left him the care and trust and advantage of publishing his posthumous writings.

Upon this event Mr. Swift removed to London, and applied by petition to King William, upon the claim of a promise his majesty had made to Sir William Temple, that he would give Mr. Swift a prebend of Canterbury or Westminster. The Earl of Romney, who professed much friendship for him, promised to second his petition; but as he was an old vicious, illiterate rake, without any sense of truth or honour, said not a word to the king. And Mr. Swift, after long attendance in vain, thought it better to comply with an invitation given him by the Earl of Berkeley to attend him to Ireland, as his chaplain and private secretary; his lordship having been appointed one of the lords-justices of that kingdom. He attended his lordship, who landed near Waterford, and Mr. Swift acted as secretary during the whole journey to Dublin. But another person had so insinuated himself into the earl's favour, by telling him that the post of secretary was not proper for a clergyman, nor would be of any advantage to one who only aimed at church preferments, that his lordship, after a poor apology, gave that office to the other.

In some months the deanery of Derry fell vacant; and it was the Earl of Berkeley's turn to dispose of it. Yet things were so ordered, that the secretary having received a bribe, the deanery was disposed of to another, and Mr. Swift was put off with some other church livings not worth above a third part of that rich deanery, and at this present not a sixth. The excuse pretended was his being too young, although he was then thirty years old.

THE LIFE OF JOHN DRYDEN.

CHAPTER I.

Preliminary Remarks on the Poetry of England before the Civil Wars—The Life of Dryden from his Birth till the Restoration—His early Poems, including the "Annus Mirabilis."

THE Life of Dryden may be said to comprehend a history of the literature of England, and its changes, during nearly half a century. While his great contemporary Milton was in silence and secresy laying the foundation of that immortal fame, which no poet has so highly deserved, Dryden's labours were ever in the eye of the public; and he maintained, from the time of the Restoration till his death, in 1700, a decided and acknowledged superiority over all the poets of his age. As he wrote from necessity, he was obliged to pay a certain deference to the public opinion; for he, whose bread depends upon the success of his volume, is compelled to study popularity: but, on the other hand, his better judgment was often directed to improve that of his readers; so that he alternately influenced and stooped to the national taste of the day. If, therefore, we would know the gradual changes which took place in our poetry during the above period, we have only to consult the writings of an author, who produced yearly some new performance, allowed to be most excellent in the particular style which was fashionable for the time. It is the object of this memoir to connect, with the account of Dryden's life and publications, such a general view of the literature of the time, as may enable the reader to estimate how far the age was indebted to the poet; and how far the poet was influenced by the taste and manners of the age. A few preliminary remarks on the literature of the earlier part of the seventeenth century will form a necessary introduction to this Biographical Memoir.

When James I. ascended the throne of England, he came to rule a court and people, as much distinguished for literature as for commerce and arms. Shakspeare was in the zenith of his reputation, and England possessed other poets inferior to Shakspeare alone; or, indeed, the higher order of whose plays may claim to be ranked above the inferior dramas ascribed to him. Among these we may reckon Massinger, who approached to Shakspeare in dignity; Beaumont and Fletcher, who surpassed him in drawing female characters, and those of polite and courtly life; and Jonson, who attempted to supply,

by depth of learning, and laboured accuracy of character, the want of that flow of imagination, which nature had denied to him. Others, who flourished in the reign of James and his son, though little known to the general readers of the present age even by name, had a just claim to be distinguished from the common herd of authors. Ford, Webster, Marston, Brome, Shirley, even Chapman and Decker, added lustre to the stage for which they wrote. The drama, it is true, was the branch of poetry most successfully cultivated; for it afforded the most ready appeal to the public taste. The number of theatres then open in all parts of the city, secured to the adventurous poet the means of having his performance represented upon one stage or other; and he was neither tired nor disgusted by the difficulties, and disagreeable observances, which must now be necessarily undergone by every candidate for dramatic laurels.* But, although during the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James I., the stage seems to have afforded the principal employment of the poets, there wanted not many who cultivated, with success, the other departments of Parnassus. It is only necessary to name Spenser, whose magic tale continues to interest us, in despite of the languor of a continued allegory; Drayton, who, though less known, possesses perhaps equal powers of poetry; Beaumont the elder, whose poem on "Bosworth Field" carries us back to the days of the Plantagenets; Fairfax, the translator of Tasso, the melody of whose numbers became the model of Waller; besides many others, who ornamented this era of British literature.

Notwithstanding the splendour of these great names, it must be confessed, that one common fault, in a greater or less degree, pervaded the most admired poetry of Queen Elizabeth's age. This was the fatal propensity to *false wit;* to substitute, namely, strange and unexpected connexions of sound, or of idea, for real humour, and even for the effusions of the stronger passions. It seems likely that this fashion arose at court, a sphere in which its denizens never think they move with due lustre, until they have adopted a form of expression, as well as a system of manners, different from that which is proper to mankind at large. In Elizabeth's reign, the court language was for some time formed on the plan of one Lillie, a pedantic courtier, who wrote a book, entitled "Euphues and his England, or the Anatomy of Wit;" which quality he makes to consist in the indulgence of every monstrous and over-strained conceit, that can be engendered by a

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* I do not pretend to enter into the question of the effect of the drama upon morals. If this shall be found prejudicial, two theatres are too many. But, in the present woful decline of theatrical exhibition, we may be permitted to remember, that the gardener who wishes to have a rare diversity of a common flower, sows whole beds with the species; and that the monopoly granted to two huge theatres must necessarily diminish, in a complicated ratio, both the number of play writers, and the chance of anything very excellent being brought forward.

[This monopoly has long been withdrawn. Our readers will judge what the effect has been.—Ed.]

strong memory and a heated brain, applied to the absurd purpose of hatching unnatural conceits.* It appears, that this fantastical person had a considerable share in determining the false taste of his age, which soon became so general, that the tares which sprung from it are to be found even among the choicest of the wheat. Shakspeare himself affords us too many instances of this fashionable heresy in wit; and he, who could create new worlds out of his own imagination, descended to low, and often ill-timed puns and quibbles. This was not an evil to be cured by the accession of our Scottish James, whose qualifications as a punster were at least equal to his boasted *king-craft*.† The false taste, which had been gaining ground even in the reign of Elizabeth, now overflowed the whole kingdom with the impetuosity of a land-flood. These outrages upon language were committed without regard to time and place. They were held good arguments at the bar, though Bacon sat on the woolsack; and eloquence irresistible by the most hardened sinner, when King or Corbet were in the pulpit. Where grave and learned professions set the example, the poets, it will readily be believed, ran headlong into an error, for which they could plead such respectable example. The affectation "of the word" and "of the letter," for alliteration was almost as fashionable as punning, seemed, in some degree, to bring back English composition to the barbarous rules of the ancient Anglo-Saxons, the merit of whose poems consisted, not in the ideas, but in the quaint arrangement of the words, and the regular recurrence of some favourite sound or letter.

This peculiar taste for twisting and playing upon words, instead of applying them to their natural and proper use, was combined with the similar extravagance of those whom Dr. Johnson has entitled Metaphysical Poets. This class of authors used the same violence towards images and ideas which had formerly been applied to words; in truth, the two styles were often combined, and, even when separate, had a kindred alliance with each other. It is the business of the punster to discover and yoke together two words, which, while they have some resemblance in sound, the more exact the better, convey a totally different signification. The metaphysical poet, on the other hand, piqued himself in discovering hidden resemblances between ideas apparently the most dissimilar, and in combining, by some violent and compelled association, illustrations and allusions utterly foreign from each other. Thus did the metaphysical poet resemble the quibbler, exercising precisely the same tyranny over ideas, which the latter practised upon sounds only.

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* Our deserved idolatry of Shakspeare and Milton was equalled by that paid to this pedantic coxcomb in his own time. He is called, in the title page of his plays, (for, besides "Euphues," he wrote what he styled "Court Comedies,") "the only rare poet of that time; the witty, comical, facetiously quick, and unparalleled John Lillie." The Satire in "Cinthia's Revels" is directed by Ben Jonson against this false and pedantic taste.

† So that learned and sapient monarch was pleased to call his skill in politics.

Jonson gave an early example of metaphysical poetry; indeed, it was the natural resource of a mind amply stored with learning, gifted with a tenacious memory and the power of constant labour, but to which was denied that vivid perception of what is naturally beautiful, and that happiness of expression, which at once conveys to the reader the idea of the poet. These latter qualities unite in many passages of Shakspeare, of which the reader at once acknowledges the beauty, the justice, and the simplicity. But such Jonson was unequal to produce; and he substituted the strange, forced, and most unnatural, though ingenious analogies, which were afterwards copied by Donne and Cowley. In reading Shakspeare, we often meet passages so congenial to our nature and feelings, that, beautiful as they are, we can hardly help wondering they did not occur to ourselves; in studying Jonson, we have often to marvel how his conceptions could have occurred to any human being. The one is like an ancient statue, the beauty of which, springing from the exactness of proportion, does not always strike at first sight, but rises upon us as we bestow time in considering it; the other is the representation of a monster, which is at first only surprising, and ludicrous or disgusting ever after. When the taste for simplicity, however, is once destroyed, it is long ere a nation recovers it; and the metaphysical poets seem to have retained possession of the public favour from the reign of James I. till the beginning of the Civil Wars silenced the muses. The universities were perhaps to blame during this period of usurpation; for which it may be admitted in excuse, that the metaphysical poetry could only be practised by men whose minds were deeply stored with learning, and who could boldly draw upon a large fund of acquired knowledge for supplying the expenditure of far-fetched and extravagant images, which their compositions required. The book of Nature is before all men; but when her limits are to be overstepped, the acquirement of adventitious knowledge becomes of paramount necessity; and it was but natural that Cambridge and Oxford should prize a style of poetry, to which depth of learning was absolutely indispensable.

I have stated, that the metaphysical poetry was fashionable during the early part of Charles the First's reign. It is true, that Milton descended to upbraid that unfortunate prince, that the chosen companion of his private hours was one *William Shakspeare, a player*; but Charles admitted less sacred poets to share his partiality. Ben Jonson supplied his court with masques, and his pageants with verses; and, notwithstanding an ill-natured story, shared no inconsiderable portion of his bounty.* Donne, a leader among the metaphysical poets,

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* In Jonson's last illness, Charles is said to have sent him ten pieces. "He sends me so miserable a donation," said the expiring satirist, "because I am poor, and live in an alley; go back and tell him, his soul lives in an alley." Whatever be the truth of this tradition, we know, from an epigram by Jonson, that the king at one time gave him an hundred pounds; no trifling gift for a poor bard, even in the present day.

with whom King James had punned and quibbled in person,* shared, in a remarkable degree, the good graces of Charles I., who may therefore be supposed no enemy to his vein of poetry, although neither his sincere piety nor his sacred office restrained him from fantastic indulgence in extravagant conceit, even upon the most solemn themes which can be selected for poetry. Cowley, who, with the learning and acuteness of Donne, possessed the more poetical qualities of a fertile imagination, and frequent happiness of expression, and who claims the highest place of all who ever plied the unprofitable trade of combining dissimilar and repugnant ideas, was not indeed known to the king during his prosperity; but his talents recommended him at the military court of Oxford, and the most ingenious poet of the metaphysical class enjoyed the applause of Charles before he shared the exile of his consort Henrietta. Cleveland also was honoured with the early notice of Charles; one of the most distinguished metaphysical bards, who afterwards exerted his talents of wit and satire upon the royal side, and strained his imagination for extravagant invective against the Scottish army, who sold their king, and the parliament leaders, who bought him. All these, and others unnecessary to mention, were read and respected at court; being esteemed by their contemporaries, and doubtless believing themselves, the wonder of their own, and the pattern of succeeding ages; and however much they might differ from each other in parts and genius, they sought the same road to poetical fame, by starting the most unnatural images which their imaginations could conceive, or by hunting more common allusions through the most minute and circumstantial particulars and ramifications.

Yet, though during the age of Charles I. the metaphysical poets enjoyed the larger proportion of public applause, authors were not wanting who sought other modes of distinguishing themselves. Milton, who must not be named in the same paragraph with others, although he had not yet meditated the sublime work which was to carry his name to immortality, disdained, even in his lesser compositions, the preposterous conceits and learned absurdities, by which his contemporaries acquired distinction. Some of his slighter academic prolusions are, indeed, tinged with the prevailing taste of his age, or, perhaps, were written in ridicule of it; but no circumstance in his life is more remarkable, than that "Comus," the "Monody on Lycidas," the "Allegro and Penseroso," and the "Hymn to the Nativity," are unpolluted by the metaphysical jargon and affected language which the

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* "About a year after his return out of Germany, Dr. Carey was made Bishop of Exeter; and by his removal the deanery of St. Paul's being vacant, the king sent to Dr. Donne, and appointed him to attend him at dinner the next day. When his majesty was sate down, before he had eat any meat, he said, after his pleasant manner, 'Dr. Donne, I have invited you to dinner; and though you sit not down with me, yet I will carve to you of a dish that I know you love well; for knowing you love London, I do therefore make you Dean of Paul's; and when I have dined, then do you take your beloved dish home to your study; say grace there to yourself, and much good may it do you.'"—WALLON'S *Life of Donne.*

age esteemed indispensable to poetry. This refusal to bend to an evil so prevailing, and which held out so many temptations to a youth of learning and genius, can only be ascribed to the natural chastity of Milton's taste, improved by an earnest and eager study of the purest models of antiquity.

But besides Milton, who stood aloof and alone, there was a race of lesser poets, who endeavoured to glean the refuse of the applause reaped by Donne, Cowley, and their followers, by adopting ornaments which the latter had neglected, perhaps, because they could be attained without much labour or abstruse learning. The metaphysical poets, in their slip-shod pindarics, had totally despised, not only smoothness and elegance, but the common rhythm of versification. Many and long passages may be read without perceiving the least difference between them and barbarous, jingling, ill-regulated prose; and in appearance, though the lines be divided into unequal lengths, the eye and ear acknowledge little difference between them and the inscription on a tombstone. In a word, not only harmony of numbers, but numbers themselves, were altogether neglected; or, if an author so far respected ancient practice as to make lines which could be scanned like verse, he had done his part, and was perfectly indifferent, although they sounded like prose. But as melody will be always acceptable to the ear, some poets chose this neglected road to fame, and gained a portion of public favour, by attending to the laws of harmony, which their rivals had discarded. Waller and Denham were the first who thus distinguished themselves; but, as Johnson happily remarks, what was acquired by Denham, was inherited by Waller. Something there was in the situation of both these authors, which led them to depart from what was then the beaten path of composition. They were men of rank, wealth, and fashion, and had experienced all the interruptions to deep study, with which such elevated station is naturally attended. It was in vain for Waller, a wit, a courtier, and a politician; or for Denham, who was only distinguished at the university as a dreaming, dissipated gambler, to attempt to rival the metaphysical subtleties of Donne and Cowley, who had spent serious and sequestered lives in acquiring the knowledge and learning which they squandered in their poetry. Necessity, therefore, and perhaps a dawning of more simple taste, impelled these courtly poets to seek another and more natural mode of pleasing. The melody of verse was a province unoccupied, and Waller, forming his rhythm upon the modulation of Fairfax, and other poets of the maiden reign, exhibited in his very first poem striking marks of attention to the suavity of numbers. Denham, in his dedication to Charles II., informs us, that the indulgence of his poetical vein had drawn the notice, although accompanied with the gentle censure, of Charles I., when, in 1647, he obtained access to his person by the intercession of Hugh Peters. Suckling, whom Dryden has termed "a sprightly wit, and a courtly writer," may be added to the list of smooth and easy poets of the period, and had the same motives as Denham and Waller

for attaching himself to that style of composition. He was allowed to have the peculiar art of making whatever he did become him; and it cannot be doubted, that his light and airy style of ballads and sonnets had many admirers. Upon the whole, this class of poets, although they hardly divided the popular favour with the others, were also noticed and applauded. Thus the poets of the earlier part of the seventeenth century may be divided into one class, who sacrificed both sense and sound to the exercise of extravagant, though ingenious, associations of imagery; and a second, who, aiming to distinguish themselves by melody of versification, were satisfied with light and trivial subjects, and too often contented with attaining smoothness of measure, neglected the more essential qualities of poetry.

The intervention of the civil wars greatly interrupted the study of poetry. The national attention was called to other objects, and those who, in the former peaceful reigns, would have perhaps distinguished themselves as poets and dramatists, were now struggling for fame in the the field, or declaiming for power in the senate. The manners of the prevailing party, their fanatical detestation of everything like elegant or literary amusement, their affected horror at stage representations, which at once silenced the theatres, and their contempt for profane learning, which degraded the universities, all operated, during the civil wars and succeeding usurpation, to check the pursuits of the poet, by withdrawing that public approbation, which is the best, and often the sole, reward of his labour. There was, at this time, a sort of interregnum in the public taste, as well as in its government. The same poets were no doubt alive who had distinguished themselves at the court of Charles: but Cowley and Denham were exiled with their sovereign; Waller was awed into silence, by the rigour of the puritanic spirit; and even the muse of Milton was scared from him by the clamour of religious and political controversy, and only returned, like a sincere friend, to cheer the adversity of one who had neglected her during his career of worldly importance.

During this period, the most unfavourable to literature which had occurred for at least two centuries, Dryden, the subject of this memoir, was gradually and silently imbibing those stores of learning, and cultivating that fancy, which was to do so much to further the reformation of taste and poetry. It is now time to state his descent and parentage.

The name of Dryden is local, and probably originated in the north of England, where, as well as in the neighbouring counties of Scotland, it frequently occurs, though it is not now borne by any person of distinction in these parts. David Driden, or Dryden, married the daughter of William Nicholson, of Staff-Hill, in the county of Cumberland, and was the great-great-grandfather of our poet. John Dryden, eldest son of David, settled in Northamptonshire, where he acquired the estate of Canons-Ashby, by marriage with Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir John Cope of that county. Wood says, that John Dryden was by profession a schoolmaster, and honoured with the friendship of the

great Erasmus, who stood godfather to one of his sons.* He appears, from some passages in his will, to have entertained the puritanical principles, which, we shall presently find, descended to his family.† Erasmus Driden, his eldest son, succeeded to the estate of Canons-Ashby, was high-sheriff of Northamptonshire, in the fortieth year of Queen Elizabeth, and was created a knight baronet in the seventeenth of King James I. Sir Erasmus married Frances, second daughter and co-heiress of William Wilkes of Hodnell, in Warwickshire, by whom he had three sons, first, Sir John Driden, his successor in the title and estate of Canons-Ashby; second, William Driden, of Farndon, in Northamptonshire; third, Erasmus Driden, of Tichmarsh, in the same county. The last of these was the father of the poet.

Erasmus Driden married Mary, the daughter of the Reverend Henry Pickering, younger son of Sir Gilbert Pickering, a person who, though in considerable favour with James I., was a zealous puritan, and so noted for opposition to the Catholics, that the conspirators in the Gunpowder Treason, his own brother-in-law being one of the number,‡ had resolved upon his individual murder, as an episode to the main plot, determining, at the same time, so to conduct it, as to throw the suspicion of the destruction of the Parliament upon the puritans.§ These principles, we shall soon see, became hereditary in

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* *Fasti Oxon.* vol. i. p. 115. Considering John Dryden's marriage with the heiress of a man of knightly rank, it seems unlikely that he followed the profession of a schoolmaster. But Wood could hardly be mistaken in the second circumstance, some of the family having gloried in it in his hearing.

† The testator bequeaths his soul to his Creator, with this singular expression of confidence, "the Holy Ghost assuring my spirit, that I am the elect of God."

‡ Robert Keies, executed 31st January, 1606, of whom Fuller, in his "Church History," tells the following anecdote:—"A few days before the fatal blow should have been given, Keies, being at Tichmarsh, in Northamptonshire, at his brother-in-law's house, Mr. Gilbert Pickering, a Protestant, he suddenly whipped out his sword, and in merriment made many offers therewith at the heads, necks, and sides, of several gentlemen and ladies then in his company. It was then taken for a mere frolic, and so passed accordingly; but afterwards, when the treason was discovered, such as remembered his gestures thought he practised what he intended to do when the plot should take effect; that is, to hack and hew, kill and destroy, all eminent persons of a different religion from himself."—*Caulfield's History of the Gunpowder Plot.*

§ The following curious story is told to that effect, in Caulfield's "History of the Gunpowder Plot:"—

"There was a Mr. Pickering of Tichmarsh-Grove, in Northamptonshire, who was in great esteem with King James. This Mr. Pickering had a horse of special note for swiftness, on which he used to hunt with the king. A little before the blow was to be given, Mr. Keies, one of the conspirators, and brother-in-law to Mr. Pickering, borrowed this horse of him, and conveyed him to London upon a bloody design, which was thus contrived:—Fawkes, upon the day of the fatal blow, was appointed to retire himself into St. George's Fields, where this horse was to attend him, to further his escape (as they made him believe), as soon as the Parliament should be blown up. It was likewise contrived, that Mr. Pickering, who was noted for a Puritan, should that morning be murdered in his bed, and secretly conveyed away; and also that Fawkes, as soon as he came in to St.

the family of Pickering. Mr. Malone's industry has collected little concerning our author's maternal grandfather, excepting that he was born in 1584; named minister of Oldwinkle All-Saints in 1647; and died in 1657. From the time when he attained this preferment, it is highly probable, that he had been recommended to it by the puritanical tenets which he doubtless held in common with the rest of his family.

Of the poet's father, Erasmus, we know even less than of his other relations. He acted as a justice of peace during the usurpation, and was the father of no less than fourteen children; four sons, and ten daughters. The sons were John, Erasmus, Henry, and James; the daughters, Agnes, Rose, Lucy, Mary, Martha, Elizabeth, Hester, Hannah, Abigail, Frances. Such anecdotes concerning them as my predecessors have recovered, may be found in the note.*

John Dryden, the subject of this memoir, was born at the parsonage house of Oldwinkle All-Saints, on or about the 9th day of August, 1631. The village then belonged to the family of Exeter, as we are informed by the poet himself, in the postscript to his Virgil. That his family were Puritans may readily be admitted; but that they were Anabaptists, although confidently asserted by some of our author's political or poetical antagonists, appears altogether improbable. Not-

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George's Fields, should be there murdered, and so mangled, that he could not be known; upon which, it was to be spread abroad, that the Puritans had blown up the Parliament-house; and the better to make the world believe it, there was Mr. Pickering, with his choice horse ready to escape, but that stirred up some, who seeing the heinousness of the fact, and him ready to escape, in detestation of so horrible a deed, fell upon him, and hewed him to pieces; and to make it more clear, there was his horse, known to be of special speed and swiftness, ready to carry him away; and upon this rumour, a massacre should have gone through the whole land upon the Puritans.

"When the contrivance of this plot was discovered by some of the conspirators, and Fawkes, who was now a prisoner in the Tower, made acquainted with it, whereas before he was made to believe by his companions, that he should be bountifully rewarded for that his good service to the Catholic cause, now perceiving that, on the contrary, his death had been contrived by them, he thereupon freely confessed all that he knew concerning that horrid conspiracy, which before all the torments of the rack could not force him to do.

"The truth of this was attested by Mr. William Perkins, who had it from Mr. Clement Cotton, to whom Mr. Pickering gave the above relation."

* Erasmus, the poet's immediate younger brother, was in trade, and resided in King Street, Westminster. He succeeded to the family title and estate upon the death of Sir John Dryden, and died at the seat of Canons-Ashby, 3rd November, 1718, leaving one daughter and five grandsons. Henry, the poet's third brother, went to Jamaica, and died there, leaving a son, Richard. James, the fourth of the sons, was a tobacconist in London, and died there, leaving two daughters. Of the daughters, Mr. Malone, after Oldys, says, that Agnes married Sylvester Emelyn of Stanford, Gent.; that Rose married ——— Laughton of Calworth, D.D., in the county of Huntingdon; that Lucy became the wife of Stephen Umwell of London, merchant; and Martha of ——— Bletso of Northampton. Another of the daughters was married to one Shermardine, a bookseller in Little Britain; and Frances, the youngest, to Joseph Sandwell, a tobacconist in Newgate Street. This last died, 10th October, 1730, at the advanced age of ninety. She had survived the poet about thirty years. Of the remaining four sisters, no notices occur.

withstanding, therefore, the sarcasm of the Duke of Buckingham, the register of Oldwinkle All-Saints parish, had it been in existence, would probably have been found to contain the record of our poet's baptism.

Dryden seems to have received the rudiments of his education at Tichmarsh,* and was admitted a king's scholar at Westminster, under the tuition of the celebrated Dr. Bushby, for whom he ever afterwards entertained the most sincere veneration. One of his letters to his old master is addressed, "Honoured Sir," and couched in terms of respect, and even humility, fully sufficient for the occasion. Another written by Dryden, when his feelings were considerably irritated by a supposed injustice done to his son, is nevertheless qualified by great personal deference to his old preceptor. It may be readily supposed, that such a scholar, under so able a teacher, must have made rapid progress in classical learning. The bent of the juvenile poet, even at this early period, distinguished itself. He translated the third satire of Perseus, as a Thursday night's task, and executed many other exercises of the same nature, in English verse, none of which are now in existence.† During the last year of his residence at Westminster, the death of Henry Lord Hastings, a young nobleman of great learning, and much beloved, called forth no less than ninety-eight elegies, one of which was written by our poet, then about eighteen years old. They were published in 1650, under the title of "Lachrymæ Musarum."

Dryden, having obtained a Westminster scholarship, was admitted to Trinity College, Cambridge, on the 11th May, 1650, his tutor being the Reverend John Templer, M.A., a man of some learning, who wrote a Latin Treatise in confutation of Hobbes, and a few theological tracts and single sermons. While at college, our author's conduct seems not to have been uniformly regular. He was subjected to slight punishment for contumacy to the vice-master,‡ and seems, according to the statement of an obscure libeller, to have been engaged in some public and notorious dispute with a nobleman's son, probably on account of

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* Upon a monument, erected by Elizabeth Creed to the poet's memory in the church at Tichmarsh, are these words: "We boast that he was bred and had his first learning here."

† "I remember (says Dryden, in a postscript to the argument of the third satire of Perseus) I translated this satire when I was a King's scholar at Westminster school, for Thursday night's exercise; and believe, that it, and many other of my exercises of this nature in English verse, are still in the hands of my learned master, the Rev. Dr. Bushby."

‡ The following order is quoted, by Mr. Malone, from the Conclusion-book, in the archives of Trinity College, p. 221.

"July 19, 1652. Agreed, then, That Dryden be put out of Comons, for a fortnight at least; and that he goe not out of the colledg, during the time aforesaid, excepting to sermons, without express leave from the master, or vice-master; and that, at the end of the fortnight, he read a confession of his crime in the hall, at dinner-time, at the three - - - - fellowes table.

"His crime was, his disobedience to the vice-master, and his contumacy in taking his punishment inflicted by him."

the indulgence of his turn for satire.* He took, however, the degree of Bachelor, in January, 1653-4, but neither became Master of Arts,† nor a fellow of the university, and certainly never retained for it much of that veneration usually paid by an English scholar to his Alma Mater. He often celebrates Oxford, but only mentions Cambridge as the contrast of the sister university in point of taste and learning:

> "Oxford to him a dearer name shall be
> Than his own mother university:
> Thebes did his green unknowing youth engage,
> He chooses Athens in his riper age."‡

A preference so uncommon, in one who had studied at Cambridge, probably originated in those slight disgraces, or perhaps in some other cause of disgust, which we may now search for in vain.

In June, 1654, the death of his father, Erasmus Dryden, proved a temporary interruption to our author's studies. He left the university, on this occasion, to take possession of his inheritance, consisting of two-thirds of a small estate near Blakesley, in Northamptonshire, worth, in all, about sixty pounds a-year. The other third part of this small property was bequeathed to his mother during her life, and the property reverted to the poet after her death in 1676. With this little patrimony our author returned to Cambridge, where he continued until the middle of the year 1657.

Although Dryden's residence at the university was prolonged to the unusual space of nearly seven years, we do not find that he distinguished himself, during that time by any poetical prolusions, excepting a few lines prefixed to a work, entitled, "Sion and Parnassus; or Epigrams on several Texts of the Old and New Testaments," published in 1650, by John Hoddesden.§ Mr. Malone conjectures that our poet would have contributed to the academic collection of verses, entitled, "Oliva Pacis," and published in 1654, on the peace between England and Holland, had not his father's death interfered at that period. It is probable, we lose but little by the disappearance of any occasional verses which may have been produced by Dryden at this time. The

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* Shadwell, in the Medal of John Bayes,

> "At Cambridge first your scurrilous vein began,
> Where saucily you traduced a nobleman;
> Who for that crime rebuked you on the head,
> And you had been expell'd, had you not fled."

† He received this degree by dispensation from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

‡ Prologue to the University of Oxford.

§ Jonathan Dryden, elected a scholar from Westminster into Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1656, of which he became fellow in 1662, was author of some verses in the Cambridge Collections in 1661, on the death of the Duke of Gloucester, and the marriage of the Princess of Orange; and in 1662, on the marriage of Charles II., which have been imputed to our author. An order, quoted by Mr. Malone, for abatement of the commencement-money paid at taking the Bachelor's degree, on account of poverty, applies to Jonathan, not to John Dryden.

elegy on Lord Hastings, the lines prefixed to "Sion and Parnassus," and some complimentary stanzas which occur in a letter to his cousin Honor Driden, would have been enough to assure us, even without his own testimony, that Cowley was the darling of his youth; and that he imitated his points of wit, and quirks of epigram, with a similar contempt for the propriety of their application. From these poems, we learn enough to be grateful, that Dryden was born at a later period in his century; for had not the road to fame been altered in consequence of the Restoration, his extensive information and acute ingenuity would probably have betrayed the author of the "Ode to St. Cecilia," and the father of English poetical harmony, into rivalling the metaphysical pindarics of Donne and Cowley. The verses, to which we allude, display their subtlety of thought, their puerile extravagance of conceit, and that structure of verse, which, as the poet himself says of Holyday's translations, has nothing of verse in it except the worst part of it—the rhyme, and that far from being unexceptionable. The following lines, in which the poet describes the death of Lord Hastings by small-pox, will be probably admitted as a justification of this censure:

"Was there no milder way but the small-pox,
The very filthiness of Pandora's box?
So many spots, like naves on Venus' soil,
One jewel set off with so many a foil;
Blisters with pride swell'd, which through's flesh did sprout,
Like rose-buds, stuck i'the lily-skin about.
Each little pimple had a tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit,
Which, rebel-like, with its own lord at strife,
Thus made an insurrection 'gainst his life.
Or were these gems sent to adorn his skin,
The cabinet of a richer soul within?
No comet need foretel his change drew on,
Whose corpse might seem a constellation."

This is exactly in the tone of Bishop Corbett's invective against the same disease:

"Oh thou deform'd, unwoman-like disease,
Thou plough'st up flesh and blood, and there sow'st pease;
And leav'st such prints on beauty that dost come,
As clouted shoon do on a floor of loam.
Thou that of faces honey-combs dost make,
And of two breasts two cullenders, forsake
Thy deadly trade; now thou art rich, give o'er,
And let our curses call thee forth no more."

After leaving the university, our author entered the world, supported by friends, from whose character, principles, and situation, it might have been prophesied, with probability, that his success in life, and his literary reputation, would have been exactly the reverse of what they actually proved. Sir Gilbert Pickering was cousin-german to the poet, and also to his mother; thus standing related to Dryden in a double

connexion.* This gentleman was a staunch Puritan, and having set out as a reformer, ended by being a regicide, and an abettor of the tyranny of Cromwell. He was one of the judges of the unfortunate Charles; and though he did not sit in that bloody court upon the last and fatal day, yet he seems to have concurred in the most violent measures of the unconscientious men who did so. He had been one of the parliamentary counsellors of state, and hesitated not to be numbered among the godly and discreet persons who assisted Cromwell as a privy council. Moreover, he was lord chamberlain of the Protector's court, and received the honour of his mock peerage.

The patronage of such a person was more likely to have elevated Dryden to the temporal greatness and wealth acquired by the sequestrators and committee-men of that oppressive time, than to have aided him in attaining the summits of Parnassus. For, according to the slight records which Mr. Malone has recovered concerning Sir Gilbert Pickering's character, it would seem, that, to the hard, precise, fanatical contempt of every illumination, save the inward light which he derived from his sect, he added the properties of a fiery temper, and a rude and savage address. In what capacity Dryden lived with his kinsman, or to what line of life circumstances seemed to destine the future poet, we are left at liberty to conjecture. Shadwell, the virulent antagonist of our author, has called him Sir Gilbert Pickering's clerk; and it is indeed highly probable, that he was employed as his amanuensis, or secretary:

> The next step of advancement you began
> Was being clerk to Noll's lord chamberlain,
> A sequestrator and committee-man.
>
> *The Medal of John Bayes.*

But I cannot, with Mr. Malone, interpret the same passage, by supposing the third line of the triplet to apply to Dryden. Had he been actually a member of a committee of sequestration, that circumstance would never have remained in the dubious obscurity of Shadwell's poetry; it would have been as often echoed and re-echoed, as every other incident of the poet's life, which was capable of bearing an unfavourable interpretation. I incline therefore to believe, that the terms *sequestrator* and *committee-man* apply not to the poet, but to his patron Sir Gilbert, to whom their propriety cannot be doubted.

Sir Gilbert Pickering was not our author's only relation at the court of Cromwell. The chief of his family, Sir John Driden, elder brother of the poet's father, was also a flaming and bigoted Puritan, through whose gifts and merits his nephew might reasonably hope to attain preferment. In a youth entering life under the protection of such relations, who could have anticipated the future dramatist and poet

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* Sir John Pickering, father of Sir Gilbert, married Susan, the sister of Erasmus Dryden, the poet's father. But Mary Pickering, the poet's mother, was niece to Sir John Pickering; and thus her son Sir Gilbert was *her* cousin-german also.

laureate, much less the advocate and martyr of prerogative and of the Stuart family, the convert and confessor of the Roman Catholic faith? In his after career, his early connexions with the Puritans, and the principles of his kinsmen during the Civil Wars and usurpation, were often made subjects of reproach, to which he never seems to have deigned an answer.

The death of Cromwell was the first theme of our poet's muse. Averse as the Puritans were to any poetry, save that of Hopkins, of Withers, or of Wisdom, they may be reasonably supposed to have had some sympathy with Dryden's sorrow upon the death of Oliver, even although it vented itself in the profane and unprofitable shape of an elegy. But we have no means of estimating its reception with the public, if, in truth, the public long interested themselves about the memory of Cromwell, while his relations and dependents presented to them the more animated and interesting spectacle of a struggle for his usurped power. Richard perhaps, and the immediate friends of the deceased Protector, with such of Dryden's relations as were attached to his memory, may have thought, like the Tinker, in the "Taming of the Shrew," that this same elegy was "marvellous good matter," but it did not probably attract much general attention. The first edition, in 1659, is extremely rare: it was reprinted, however, along with those of Sprat and Waller, in the course of the same year. After the Restoration this piece fell into a state of oblivion, from which it may be believed that the author, who had seen a new light in politics, was by no means solicitous to recall it. His political antagonist did not, however, fail to awaken its memory, when Dryden became a decided advocate for the royal prerogative, and the hereditary right of the Stuarts. During the controversies of Charles the Second's reign, in which Dryden took so decided a share, his eulogy on Cromwell was often objected to him, as a proof of inconsistence and apostacy. One passage, which plainly applies to the civil wars in general, was wrested to signify an explicit approbation of the murder of Charles the First; and the whole piece was reprinted by an incensed antagonist, under the title of "An Elegy on the Usurper O. C., by the author of Absalom and Achitophel, published (it is ironically added) to show the loyalty and integrity of the poet,"—an odd piece of vengeance, which has perhaps never been paralleled, except in the single case of "Love in a Hollow Tree."* The motives of the Duchess of Marlborough, in reprinting Lord Grimestone's memorable dramatic essay, did not here apply. The elegy on Cromwell, although doubtless sufficiently faulty, contained symptoms of a regenerating taste; and, politically considered, although a panegyric on an usurper, the topics of praise are selected with attention to truth, and are, generally speaking, such as

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* This piece was called in, and destroyed by the noble author; but Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, when opposing Lord Grimestone at an election, maliciously printed and dispersed a large impression of his smothered performance, with a frontispiece representing an elephant dancing on the slack rope.

Cromwell's worst enemies could not have denied to him. Neither had Dryden made the errors, or misfortunes, of the royal family, and their followers, the subject of censure or of contrast. With respect to them, it was hardly possible that a eulogy on such a theme could have less offence in it. This was perhaps a fortunate circumstance for Dryden at the Restoration; and it must be noticed to his honour, that as he spared the exiled monarch in his panegyric on the usurper, so, after the Restoration, in his numerous writings on the side of royalty, there is no instance of his recalling his former praise of Cromwell.

After the frequent and rapid changes which the government of England underwent from the death of Cromwell, in the spring of 1660, Charles II. was restored to the throne of his ancestors. It may be easily imagined, that this event, a subject in itself highly fit for poetry, and which promised the revival of poetical pursuits, was hailed with universal acclamation by all whose turn for verse had been suppressed and stifled during the long reign of fanaticism. The Restoration led the way to the revival of letters, as well as that of legal government. With Charles, as Dryden has expressed it,

> The officious muses came along,
> A gay, harmonious quire, like angels ever young.

It was not, however, to be expected, that an alteration of the taste which had prevailed in the days of Charles I., was to be the immediate consequence of the new order of things. The muse awoke, like the sleeping beauty of the fairy tale, in the same antiquated and absurd vestments in which she had fallen asleep twenty years before; or if the reader will pardon another simile, the poets were like those who, after a long mourning, resume for a time their ordinary dresses, of which the fashion has in the meantime passed away. Other causes contributed to a temporary revival of the metaphysical poetry. Almost all its professors, attached to the house of Stuart, had been martyrs, or confessors at least, in its cause. Cowley, their leader, was yet alive, and returned to claim the late reward of his loyalty and his sufferings. Cleveland had died a victim to the contempt, rather than the persecution, of the republicans; but this most ardent of cavalier poets was succeeded by Wild, whose "Iter Boreale," a poem on Monk's march from Scotland, formed upon Cleveland's model, obtained extensive popularity among the citizens of London. Dryden's good sense and natural taste perceived the obvious defects of these, the very coarsest of metaphysical poets; insomuch, that, in his "Essay on Dramatic Poetry," he calls wresting and torturing one word into another, a catachresis, or Clevelandism, and charges Wild with being in poetry what the French call *un mauvais buffon*."

Sprat, and a host of inferior imitators, marched for a time in the footsteps of Cowley; delighted, probably, to discover in Pindaric writing, as it was called, a species of poetry which required neither sound nor sense, provided only there was a sufficient stock of florid and extravagant thoughts, expressed in harsh and bombastic language.

But this style of poetry, although it was for a time revived, and indeed continued to be occasionally employed even to the end of the eighteenth century, had too slight foundation in truth and nature to maintain the exclusive pre-eminence, which it had been exalted to during the reigns of the two first monarchs of the Stuart race. As Rochester profanely expressed it, Cowley's poetry was not of God, and therefore could not stand. An approaching change of public taste was hastened by the manners of the restored monarch and his courtiers. That pedantry which had dictated the excessive admiration of metaphysical conceits, was not the characteristic of the court of Charles II., as it had been of those of his grandfather and father. Lively and witty by nature, with all the acquired habits of an adventurer, whose wanderings, military and political, left him time neither for profound reflection, nor for deep study, the restored monarch's literary taste, which was by no means contemptible, was directed towards a lighter and more pleasing style of poetry than the harsh and scholastic productions of Donne and Cowley. The admirers, therefore, of this old school were confined to the ancient cavaliers, and the old courtiers of Charles I.; persons unlikely to lead the fashion in the court of a gay monarch, filled with such men as Buckingham, Rochester, Etherege, Sedley, and Mulgrave, whose time and habits confined their own essays to occasional verses, and satirical effusions, in which they often ridiculed the heights of poetry they were incapable of attaining. With such men the class of poets, which before the Civil War held but a secondary rank, began to rise in estimation. Waller, Suckling, and Denham, began to assert a pre-eminence over Cowley and Donne; the ladies, whose influence in the court of James and Charles I. was hardly felt, and who were then obliged to be contented with such pedantic worship as is contained in the "Mistress" of Cowley, and the "Epithilamion" of Donne, began now, when their voices were listened to, and their taste consulted, to determine that their poetical lovers should address them in strains more musical, if not more intelligible. What is most acceptable to the fair sex will always sway the mode of a gay court; and the character of a smooth and easy sonneteer was soon considered as an indispensable requisite to a man of wit and fashion, terms which were then usually synonymous.

To those who still retained a partiality for that exercise of the fancy and memory, afforded by the metaphysical poetry, the style of satire then prevalent afforded opportunities of applying it. The same depth of learning, the same extravagant ingenuity in combining the most remote images, aud in driving casual associations to the verge of absurdity, almost all the remarkable features which characterized the poetry of Cowley, may be successfully traced in the satire of Hudibras. The sublime itself borders closely on the ludicrous; but the bombast and extravagant cannot be divided from it. The turn of thought, and the peculiar kind of mental exertion, corresponds in both styles of writing; and although Butler pursued the ludicrous, and Cowley aimed at the surprising, the leading features of their poetry only differ like those of the same face convulsed with laughter, or arrested in

astonishment. The district of metaphysical poetry was thus invaded by the satirists, who sought weapons there to avenge the misfortunes and oppression which they had so lately sustained from the puritans; and as it is difficult in a laughing age to render serious what has been once applied to ludicrous purposes, Butler and his imitators retained quiet possession of the style which they had usurped from the grave bards of the earlier age.

A single poet, Sir William Davenant, made a meritorious, though a misguided and unsuccessful effort, to rescue poetry from becoming the mere handmaid of pleasure, or the partizan of political or personal disputes, and to restore her to her natural rank in society, as an auxiliary of religion, policy, law, and virtue. His heroic poem of "Gondibert" has, no doubt, great imperfections; but it intimates everywhere a mind above those laborious triflers, who called that poetry which was only verse; and very often exhibits a majestic, dignified, and manly simplicity, equally superior to the metaphysical school, by the doctrines of which Davenant was occasionally misled. Yet, if that author too frequently imitated their quaint affectation of uncommon sentiment and associations, he had at least the merit of couching them in stately and harmonious verse; a quality of poetry totally neglected by the followers of Cowley. I mention Davenant here, and separate from the other poets, who were distinguished about the time of the Restoration, because I think that Dryden, to whom we are about to return, was, at that period, an admirer and imitator of "Gondibert," as we are certain that he was a personal and intimate friend of the author.

With the return of the king, the fall of Dryden's political patrons was necessarily involved. Sir Gilbert Pickering, having been one of Charles's judges, was too happy to escape into obscurity, under an absolute disqualification for holding any office, political, civil, or ecclesiastical. The influence of Sir John Dryden was ended at the same time; and thus both these relations, under whose protection Dryden entered life, and by whose influence he was probably to have been aided in some path to wealth or eminence, became at once incapable of assisting him; and even connexion with them was rendered, by the change of times, disgraceful, if not dangerous. Yet it may be doubted whether Dryden felt this evil in its full extent. Sterne has said of a character, that a blessing which closed his mouth, or a misfortune which opened it with a good grace, were nearly equal to him; nay, that sometimes the misfortune was the more acceptable of the two. It is possible, by a parity of reasoning, that Dryden may have felt himself rather relieved from, than deprived of, his fanatical patrons, under whose guidance he could never hope to have indulged in that career of literary pursuit, which the new order of things presented to the ambition of the youthful poet; at least, he lost no time in useless lamentation, but, now in his thirtieth year, proceeded to exert that poetical talent, which had heretofore been repressed by his own situation, and that of the country.

Dryden, left to his own exertions, hastened to testify his joyful acquiescence in the restoration of monarchy, by publishing "*Astræa Redux*," a poem which was probably distinguished among the innumerable congratulations poured forth upon the occasion; and he added to those which hailed the coronation, in 1661, the verses entitled "A Panegyric to his Sacred Majesty." These pieces testify, that the author had already made some progress in harmonizing his versification. But they also contain many of those points of wit, and turns of epigram, which he condemned in his more advanced judgment. The same description applies, in a yet stronger degree, to the verses addressed to Lord Chancellor Hyde (Lord Clarendon) on the new-year's-day of 1662, in which Dryden has more closely imitated the metaphysical poetry than in any poem, except the juvenile elegy on Lord Hastings. I cannot but think, that the poet consulted the taste of his patron, rather than his own, in adopting this peculiar style. Clarendon was educated in the court of Charles I., and Dryden may have thought it necessary, in addressing him, to imitate the "strong verses," which were then admired.

According to the fashion of the times, such copies of occasional verses were rewarded by a gratuity from the person to whom they were addressed; and poets had not yet learned to think this mode of receiving assistance incompatible with the feelings of dignity or delicacy. Indeed, in the common transactions of that age, one sees something resembling the Eastern custom of accompanying with a present, and not always a splendid one, the usual forms of intercourse and civility. Thus we find the wealthy corporation of Hull, backing a polite address to the Duke of Monmouth, their governor, with a present of *six broad pieces*; and his grace deemed it a point of civility to press the acceptance of the same gratuity upon the member of parliament for the city, by whom it was delivered to him.* We may therefore believe, that Dryden received some compliment from the king and chancellor; and I am afraid the same premises authorize us to conclude that it was but trifling. Meantime, our author having no settled means of support, except his small landed property, and having now no assistance to expect from his more wealthy kinsmen, to whom, probably, neither his literary pursuits, nor his commencing them by a panegyric on the Restoration, were very agreeable, and whom he had also offended by

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* "The Duke of Monmouth returned on Saturday from New-Market. To-day I waited on him, and first presented him with your letter, which he read all over very attentively; and then prayed me to assure you, that he would, upon all occasions, be most ready to give you the marks of his affection, and assist you in any affairs you should recommend to him. I then delivered to him the six broad pieces, telling him, that I was deputed to blush on your behalf for the meanness of the present, &c.; but he took me off, and said he thanked you for it, and accepted it as a token of your kindness. He had, before I came in, as I was told, considered what to do with the gold; and but that I by all means prevented the offer, or I had been in danger of being reimbursed with it."—ANDREW MARVELL'S *Works Letter to the Mayor of Hull.*

a slight change in spelling his name,* seems to have been reduced to narrow and uncomfortable circumstances. Without believing, in its full extent, the exaggerated account given by Brown and Shadwell, we may discover from their reproaches, that, at the commencement of his literary career, Dryden was connected, and probably lodged, with Herringman the bookseller, in the New Exchange, for whom he wrote prefaces, and other occasional pieces. But having, as Mr. Malone has observed, a patrimony, though a small one, of his own, it seems impossible that our author was ever in that state of mean and abject dependence, which the malice of his enemies afterwards pretended. The same malice misrepresented, or greatly exaggerated, the nature of Dryden's obligations to Sir Robert Howard, with whom he became acquainted probably about the time of the Restoration, whose influence was exerted in his favour, and whose good offices the poet returned by literary assistance.

Sir Robert Howard was a younger son of Thomas Earl of Berkeley, and, like all his family, had distinguished himself as a royalist, particularly at the battle of Cropley Bridge. He had recently suffered a long imprisonment in Windsor Castle during the usurpation. His rank and merits made him, after the Restoration, a patron of some consequence; and upon his publishing a collection of verses very soon after that period, Dryden prefixed an address "to his honoured friend," on "his excellent poems." Sir Robert Howard understood the value of Dryden's attachment, introduced him into his family, and probably aided in procuring his productions that degree of attention from the higher world, for want of which the most valuable efforts of genius have often sunk into unmerited obscurity. Such, in short, were his exertions in favour of Dryden, that, though we cannot believe he was indebted to Howard, for those necessaries of life which he had the means to procure for himself, the poet found ground to acknowledge, that his patron had not only been "careful of his fortune, which was the effect of his nobleness, but solicitous of his reputation, which was that of his kindness."

Thus patronized, our author seems to have advanced in reputation, as he became more generally known to the learned and ingenious of his time. Yet we have but few traces of the labour, by which he doubtless attained, and secured, his place in society. A short Satire on the Dutch, written to animate the people of England against them, appeared in 1662. It is somewhat in the hard style of invective, which Cleveland applied to the Scottish nation; yet Dryden thought it would while to weave the same verses into the prologue and epilogue of the tragedy of "Amboyna," a piece written in 1673, with the same kind intentions towards the States-General.

Science, as well as poetry, began to revive after the iron dominion of military fanaticism was ended; and Dryden, who through life was attached to experimental philosophy, speedily associated himself with

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* From Driden to Dryden.

those who took interest in its progress. He was chosen a member of the newly instituted Royal Society, 26th November, 1662; an honour which cemented his connexion with the most learned men of the time, and is an evidence of the respect in which he was already held. Most of these, and the discoveries by which they had distinguished themselves, Dryden took occasion to celebrate in his "Epistle to Dr. Walter Charleton," a learned physician, upon his treatise of Stonehenge. Gilbert, Boyle, Harvey, and Ent, are mentioned with enthusiastic applause, as treading in the path pointed out by Bacon, who first broke the fetters of Aristotle, and taught the world to derive knowledge from experiment. In these elegant verses, the author divests himself of all the flippant extravagance of point and quibble, in which, complying with his age, he had hitherto indulged, though of late in a limited degree.

While thus united in friendly communion with men of kindred and congenial spirits, Dryden seems to have been sensible of the necessity of applying his literary talents to some line, in which he might derive a steadier and more certain recompense, than by writing occasional verses to the great, or doing literary drudgery for the bookseller. His own genius would probably have directed him to the ambitious labours of an epic poem; but for this the age afforded little encouragement. "Gondibert," the style of which Dryden certainly both admired and copied, became a martyr to the raillery of the critics; and to fill up the measure of shame, the "Paradise Lost" fell stillborn from the press. This last instance of bad taste had not, it is true, yet taken place; but the men who were guilty of it, were then living under Dryden's observation, and their manners and habits could not fail to teach him, to anticipate the little encouragement they were likely to afford to the loftier labours of poetry. One only line remained, in which poetical talents might exert themselves, with some chance of procuring their possessor's reward, or at least maintenance, and this was dramatic composition. To this Dryden sedulously applied himself, with various success, for many years. But before proceeding to trace the history of his dramatic career, I proceed to notice such pieces of his poetry, as exhibit marks of his earlier style of composition.

The victory gained by the Duke of York over the Dutch fleet on the 3rd of June, 1665, and his Duchess's subsequent journey into the north, furnished Dryden with the subject of a few occasional verses; in which the style of Waller (who came forth with a poem on the same subject) is successfully imitated. In addressing her grace, the poet suppresses all the horrors of the battle, and turns her eyes upon the splendour of a victory, for which the kingdom was indebted to her husband's valour, and her "chaste vows." In these verses, not the least vestige of metaphysical wit can be traced; and they were accordingly censured, as wanting height of fancy, and dignity of words. This criticism Dryden refuted, by alleging, that he had succeeded in what he did attempt, in the softness of expression and smoothness of the measure (the appropriate ornaments of an address to a lady), and that he was accused of that only thing which he could well defend.

It seems, however, very possible, that these remarks impelled him to undertake a task, in which vigour of fancy and expression might, with propriety, be exercised. Accordingly, his next poem was of greater length and importance. This is an historical account of the events of the year 1666, under the title of "*Annus Mirabilis*," to which distinction the incidents which had occurred in that space gave it some title. The poem being in the elegiac stanza, Dryden relapsed into an imitation of "Gondibert," from which he had departed ever since the "Elegy on Cromwell." From this it appears, that the author's admiration of Davenant had not decreased. Indeed, he, long afterwards, bore testimony to that author's quick and piercing imagination; which at once produced thoughts remote, new, and surprising, such as could not easily enter into any other fancy. Dryden at least equalled Davenant in this quality; and certainly excelled him in the powers of composition, which are to embody the conceptions of the imagination; and in the extent of acquired knowledge, by which they were to be enforced and illustrated. In his preface, he has vindicated the choice of his stanza, by a reference to the opinion of Davenant, which he sanctions by affirming, that he had always, himself, thought quatrains, or stanzas of verse in alternate rhyme, more noble, and of greater dignity, both for sound and number, than any other verse in use among us. By this attention to sound and rhythm, he improved upon the school of metaphysical poets, which disclaimed attention to either; but in the thought and expression itself, the style of Davenant more nearly resembled Cowley's than that of Denham and Waller. The same ardour for what Dryden calls "wit-writing," the same unceasing exercise of the memory, in search of wonderful thoughts and allusions, and the same contempt for the subject, except as the medium of displaying the author's learning and ingenuity, marks the style of Davenant, though in a less degree than that of the metaphysical poets, and though chequered with many examples of a simpler and chaster character. Some part of this deviation was, perhaps, owing to the nature of the stanza; for the structure of the quatrain prohibited the bard, who used it, from rambling into those digressive similes, which, in the pindaric strophe, might be pursued through endless ramifications. If the former started an extravagant thought, or a quaint image, he was compelled to bring it to a point within his four-lined stanza. The snake was thus scotched, though not killed; and conciseness being rendered indispensable, a great step was gained towards concentration of thought, which is necessary to the simple and to the sublime. The manner of Davenant, therefore though short-lived, and ungraced by public applause, was an advance towards true taste, from the unnatural and frantic indulgence of unrestrained fancy; and, did it claim no other merit, it possesses that of having been twice sanctioned by the practice of Dryden, upon occasions of uncommon solemnity.

The "*Annus Mirabilis*" evinces a considerable portion of labour and attention; the lines and versification are highly polished, and the expression was probably carefully corrected. Dryden, as Johnson

remarks, already exercised the superiority of his genius, by recommending his own performance, as written upon the plan of Virgil; and as no unsuccessful effort at producing those well-wrought images and descriptions, which create admiration, the proper object of heroic poetry. The "*Annus Mirabilis*" may indeed be regarded as one of Dryden's most elaborate pieces; although it is not written in his later, better, and most peculiar style of poetry.

The poem first appeared in octavo, in 1667, and was afterwards frequently reprinted in quarto. It was dedicated to the Metropolis of Great Britain, as represented by the lord mayor and magistrates. A letter to Sir Robert Howard was prefixed to the poem, in which the author explains the purpose of the work, and the difficulties which presented themselves in the execution. And in this epistle, as a contrast between the smooth and easy style of writing which was proper in addressing a lady, and the exalted style of heroic, or at least historical poetry, he introduces the verses to the Duchess of York, already mentioned.

The "*Annus Mirabilis*" being the last poetical work of any importance produced by our author, until "Absalom and Achitophel," the reader may here pause, and consider, in the progressive improvement of Dryden, the gradual renovation of public taste. The irregular pindaric ode was now abandoned to Arwaker, Behn, Durfey, and a few inferior authors; who, either from its tempting facility of execution, or from an affected admiration of old times and fashions, still pestered the public with imitations of Cowley. The rough measure of Donne (if it had any pretension to be called a measure) was no longer tolerated, and it was expected, even of those who wrote satires, lampoons, and occasional verses, that their rhymes should be rhymes, both to the ear and eye; and that they should neither adore their mistresses, nor abuse their neighbours, in lines which differed only from prose in the fashion of printing. Thus the measure used by Rochester, Buckingham, Sheffield, Sedley, and other satirists, if not polished or harmonized, approaches more nearly to modern verse, than that of Hall or Donne. In the "Elegy on Cromwell," and the "*Annus Mirabilis*," Dryden followed Davenant, who abridged, if he did not explode, the quaintnesses of his predecessors. In "*Astræa Redux*," and his occasional verses, to Dr. Charleton, the Duchess of York, and others, the poet proposed a separate and simpler model, more dignified than that of Suckling, or Waller; more harmonious in measure, and chaste in expression, than those of Cowley and Crashaw. Much, there doubtless remained, of ancient subtlety, and ingenious quibbling; but when Dryden declares, that he proposes Virgil, in preference to Ovid, to be his model in the "*Annus Mirabilis*," it sufficiently implies, that the main defect of the poetry of the last age had been discovered, and was in the way of being amended by gradual, and almost imperceptible, degrees.

In establishing, or refining, the latter style of writing, in couplet verse, our author found great assistance from his dramatic practice; to trace the commencement of which, is the purpose of the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

Revival of the Drama at the Restoration—Heroic Plays—Comedies of Intrigue—Commencement of Dryden's Dramatic Career—The Wild Gallant—Rival Ladies—Indian Queen and Emperor—Dryden's Marriage—Essay on Dramatic Poetry, and subsequent Controversy with Sir Robert Howard—The Maiden Queen—The Tempest—Sir Martin Mar-all—The Mock Astrologer—The Royal Martyr—The Two Parts of the Conquest of Granada—Dryden's Situation at this Period.

IT would appear, that Dryden, at the period of the Restoration, renounced all views of making his way in life except by exertion of the literary talents with which he was so eminently endowed. His becoming a writer of plays was a necessary consequence; for the theatres, newly opened after so long silence, were resorted to with all the ardour inspired by novelty; and dramatic composition was the only line which promised something like an adequate reward to the professors of literature. In our sketch of the taste of the seventeenth century previous to the Restoration, this topic was intentionally postponed.

In the times of James I. and of his successor, the theatre retained, in some degree, the splendour with which the excellent writers of the virgin reign had adorned it. It is true, that authors of the latter period fell far below those gigantic poets, who flourished in the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries: but what the stage had lost in dramatic composition, was, in some degree, supplied by the increasing splendour of decoration, and the favour of the court. A private theatre, called the Cockpit, was maintained at Whitehall, in which plays were performed before the court; and the king's company of actors often received command to attend the royal progresses.* Masques, a species of representation calculated exclusively for the recreation of the great, in whose halls they were exhibited, were an usual entertainment of Charles and his consort. The machinery and decorations were often superintended by Inigo Jones, and the poetry composed by Ben Jonson, the laureate. Even Milton deigned to contribute one of his most fascinating poems to the service of the drama; and, notwithstanding the severity of his puritanic tenets, "Comus" could only have been composed by one who felt the full enchantment of the theatre. But all this splendour vanished at the approach of civil war. The stage and court were almost as closely united in their fate as royalty and episcopacy, had the same enemies, the same defenders, and shared the same overwhelming ruin. "No throne no theatre," seemed as just a dogma as the famous "No king no bishop." The puritans indeed commenced their attack against

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* Malone's "History of the Stage."

royalty in this very quarter; and, while they impugned the political exertions of prerogative, they assailed the private character of the monarch and his consort, for the encouragement given to the profane stage, that rock of offence and stumbling-block to the godly. Accordingly, the superiority of the republicans was no sooner decisive, than the theatres were closed, and the dramatic poets silenced. No department of poetry was accounted lawful; but the drama being altogether unhallowed and abominable, its professors were persecuted, while others escaped with censure from the pulpit, and contempt from the rulers. The miserable shifts to which the surviving actors were reduced during the commonwealth, have been often detailed. At times they were connived at by the caprice or indolence of their persecutors; but, in general, as soon as they had acquired any slender stock of properties, they were beaten, imprisoned, and stripped, at the pleasure of the soldiery.

The Restoration naturally brought with it a revived taste for those elegant amusements, which, during the usurpation, had been condemned as heathenish, or punished as appertaining especially to the favourers of royalty. To frequent them, therefore, became a badge of loyalty, and a virtual disavowal of those puritanic tenets, which all now agreed in condemning. The taste of the restored monarch also was decidedly in favour of the drama. At the foreign courts, which it had been his lot to visit, the theatre was the chief entertainment; and as amusement was always his principal pursuit, it cannot be doubted that he often sought it there. The interest, therefore, which the monarch took in the restoration of the stage, was direct and personal. Had it not been for this circumstance, it seems probable that the general audience for a time at least, would have demanded a revival of those pieces which had been most successful before the civil wars; and that Shakspeare, Massinger, and Fletcher, would have resumed their acknowledged superiority upon the English stage. But as the theatres were re-established and cherished by the immediate influence of the sovereign, and of the court which returned with him from exile, a taste formed during their residence abroad dictated the nature of entertainments which were to be presented to them. It is worthy of remark, that Charles took the models of the two grand departments of the drama from two different countries.

France afforded the pattern of those tragedies which continued in fashion for twenty years after the Restoration, and which were called Rhyming or Heroic Plays. In that country, however, contrary to the general manners of the people, a sort of stately and precise ceremonial early took possession of the theatre. The French dramatist was under the necessity of considering less the situation of the persons of the drama than that of the performers, who were to represent it before a monarch and his court. It was not, therefore, sufficient for the author to consider how human beings would naturally express themselves in the predicament of the scene; he had the more embarrassing task of so modifying their expressions of passion and

feeling, that they might not exceed the decorum necessary in the august presence of the *Grand Monarque*. A more effectual mode of freezing the dialogue of the drama could hardly have been devised, than by introducing into the theatre the etiquette of the drawing-room. That etiquette, also, during the reign of Louis XIV., was of a kind peculiarly forced and unnatural. The romances of Calprenede and Scuderi, those ponderous and unmerciful folios now consigned to utter oblivion, were in that reign not only universally read and admired, but supposed to furnish the most perfect models of gallantry and heroism; although, in the words of an elegant female author,* these celebrated writings are justly described as containing only "unnatural representations of the passions, false sentiments, false precepts, false wit, false honour, and false modesty, with a strange heap of improbable, unnatural incidents, mixed up with true history, and fastened upon some of the great names of antiquity." Yet upon the model of such works was framed the court manners of the reign of Louis, and, in imitation of them, the French tragedy, in which every king was by prescriptive right a hero, every female a goddess, every tyrant a fire-breathing chimera, and every soldier an irresistible Amadis; in which, when perfected, we find lofty sentiments, splendid imagery, eloquent expression, sound morality, everything but the language of human passion and human character. In the hands of Corneille, and still more in those of Racine, much of the absurdity of the original model was cleared away, and much that was valuable substituted in its stead; but the plan being fundamentally wrong, the high talents of those authors unfortunately only tended to reconcile their countrymen to a style of writing, which must otherwise have fallen into contempt. Such as it was, it rose into high favour at the Court of Louis XIV., and was by Charles introduced upon the English stage. "The favour which heroic plays have lately found upon our theatres," says our author himself, "have been wholly derived to them from the countenance and approbation they have received at court."†

The French comedy, although Molière was in the zenith of his reputation, appears not to have possessed equal charms for the English monarch. The same restraint of decorum, which prevented the expression of natural passion in tragedy, prohibited all indelicate licence in comedy. Charles, probably, was secretly pleased with a system, which cramped the effusions of a tragic muse, and forbade, as indecorous, those bursts of rapturous enthusiasm, which might sometimes contain matter unpleasing to a royal ear. But the merry monarch saw no good reason why the muse of comedy should be compelled to "dwell in decencies for ever," and did not feel at all degraded when enjoying a gross pleasantry, or profane witticism, in company with the mixed mass of a popular audience. The stage, therefore, resumed more than its original licence under his auspices. Most of

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* Mrs. Chapone.—She died 1801.

† Dedication to the "Indian Emperor"

our early plays, being written in a coarse age, and designed for the amusement of a promiscuous and vulgar audience, were dishonoured by scenes of coarse and naked indelicacy. The positive enactments of James, and the grave manners of his son, in some degree repressed this disgraceful scurrility; and, in the common course of events, the English stage would have been gradually delivered from this reproach, by the increasing influence of decency and taste. But Charles II., during his exile, had lived upon a footing of equality with his banished nobles, and partaken freely and promiscuously in the pleasure and frolics by which they had endeavoured to sweeten adversity. To such a court the amusements of the drama would have appeared insipid, unless seasoned with the libertine spirit which governed their lives, and which was encouraged by the example of the monarch. Thus it is acutely argued by Dennis, in reply to Collier, that the depravity of the theatre, when revived, was owing to that very suppression, which had prevented its gradual reformation. And just so a muddy stream, if allowed its free course, will gradually purify itself; but, if dammed up for a season, and let loose at once, its first torrent cannot fail to be impregnated with every impurity. The licence of a rude age was thus revived by a corrupted one; and even those plays which were translated from the French and Spanish, were carefully seasoned with as much indelicacy, and double entendre, as was necessary to fit them for the ear of the wittiest and most profligate of monarchs.

Another remarkable feature in the comedies which succeeded the Restoration, is the structure of their plot, which was not, like that of the tragedies, formed upon the Parisian model. The English audience had not patience for the regular comedy of their neighbours, depending upon delicate turns of expression, and nicer delineation of character. The Spanish comedy, with its bustle, machinery, disguise, and complicated intrigue, was much more agreeable to their taste. This preference did not arise entirely from what the French term the phlegm of our national character, which cannot be affected but by powerful stimulants. It is indeed certain, that an Englishman expects his eye, as well as his ear, to be diverted by theatrical exhibition; but the thirst of novelty was another and separate reason, which affected the style of the revived drama. The number of new plays represented every season was incredible; and the authors were compelled to have recourse to that mode of composition which was most easily executed. Laboured accuracy of expression, and fine traits of character, joined to an arrangement of action, which should be at once pleasing, interesting, and probable, requires sedulous study, deep reflection, and long and repeated correction and revision. But these were not to be expected from a playwright, by whom three dramas were to be produced in one season; and in their place were substituted adventures, surprises, rencounters, mistakes, disguises, and escapes, all easily accomplished by the intervention of sliding panels, closets, veils, masques, large cloaks, and dark lanterns. If the dramatist was at a loss for employing these convenient implements, the fifteen hundred plays of Lope de

Vega were at hand for his instruction; presenting that rapid succession of events, and those sudden changes in the situation of the personages, which, according to the noble biographer* of the Spanish dramatist, are the charms by which he interests us so forcibly in his plots. These Spanish plays had already been resorted to by the authors of the earlier part of the century. But under the auspices of Charles II., who must often have witnessed the originals while abroad, and in some instances by his express command, translations were executed of the best and most lively Spanish comedies.†

The favourite comedies, therefore, after the Restoration, were such as depended rather upon the intricacy, than the probability, of the plot; rather upon the vivacity and liveliness, than on the natural expression of the dialogue; and, finally, rather upon extravagant and grotesque conception of character, than upon its being pointedly delineated, and accurately supported through the representation. These particulars, in which the comedies of Charles the Second's reign differ from the example set by Shakspeare, Massinger, and Beaumont and Fletcher, seem to have been derived from the Spanish model. But the taste of the age was too cultivated to follow the stage of Madrid, in introducing, or, to speak more accurately, in reviving, the character of the *gracioso*, or clown, upon that of London.‡ Something of foreign manners may be traced in the licence, assumed by valets, and domestics, in the English comedy; a freedom which at no time made a part of our national manners, though something like it may still be traced upon the continent. These seem to be the leading characteristics of the comedies of Charles the Second's reign; in which the rules of the ancients were totally disregarded. It were to be wished that the authors could have been exculpated from a heavier charge,—that of assisting to corrupt the nation, by nourishing and fomenting their evil passions, as well as by indulging and pandering to their vices.

The theatres, after the Restoration, were limited to two in number; a restriction perhaps necessary, as the exclusive patent expresses it, in regard of the extraordinary licentiousness then used in dramatic representation; but for which no very good reason can be shown, when they are at least harmless, if not laudable places of amusement. One of

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* Lord Holland.

† The "Wild Gallant," which Charles commanded to be performed before him more than once, was of the class of Spanish comedies. The "Maiden Queen," which the witty monarch honoured with the title of *his play*, is in the same division.

‡ The *gracioso*, or buffoon, according to Lord Holland, held an intermediate character between a spectator and a character in the play; interrupting with his remarks, at one time, the performance, of which he forms an essential, but very defective part in another. His part was, I presume, partly written, partly extempore. Something of the kind was certainly known upon our stage. Wilson and Tarleton, in their capacity of clowns, entered freely into a contest of wit with the spectators, which was not at all held inconsistent with their having a share in the performance.

these privileged theatres was placed under the direction of Sir William D'Avenant, whose sufferings in the royal cause merited a provision, and whose taste and talents had been directed towards the drama even during its proscription. He is said to have introduced moveable scenes upon the English stage; and, without entering into the dispute of how closely this is to be interpreted, we are certain that he added much to its splendour and decoration. His set of performers, which contained the famous Betterton, and others of great merit, was called the Duke's Company. The other licensed theatre was placed under the direction of Thomas Killigrew, much famed by tradition for his colloquial wit, but the merit of whose good things evaporated as soon as he attempted to interweave them with comedy. His performers formed what was entitled the King's Company. With this last theatre Dryden particularly connected himself, by a contract to be hereafter mentioned. None of his earlier plays were acted by the Duke's Company, unless those in which he had received assistance from others, whom he might think as well entitled as himself to prescribe the place of representation.

Such was the state of the English drama when Dryden became a candidate for theatrical laurels. So early as the year of the Restoration, he had meditated a tragedy upon the fate of the Duke of Guise; but this, he has informed us, was suppressed by the advice of some friends, who told him, that it was an excellent subject, but not so artificially managed as to render it fit for the stage. It were to be wished these scenes had been preserved, since it may be that the very want of artifice alleged by the critics of the day, would have recommended them to our more simple taste. We might at least have learned from them, whether Dryden, in his first essay, leant to the heroic, or to the ancient English tragedy. But the scene of Guise's return to Paris, is the only part of the original sketch which Dryden thought fit to interweave with the play, as acted in 1682; and as that scene is rendered literally from Davila, upon the principle that, in so remarkable an action the poet was not at liberty to change the words actually used by the persons interested, we only learn from it, that the piece was composed in blank verse, not rhyme.

In the course of the year 1661-2, our author composed the "Wild Gallant," which was acted about February, 1662-3, without success. The beautiful Countess of Castlemain, afterwards Duchess of Cleveland, extended her protection to the unfortunate performance, and received the incense of the author: who boasts,

> "Posterity will judge by my success,
> I had the Grecian poet's happiness,
> Who, waiving plots, found out a better way,—
> Some god descended, and preserved the play."

It was probably by the influence of this royal favourite, that the "Wild Gallant" was more than once performed before Charles by his own command. But the author, his piece, and his poetical compliment, were hardly treated in a "Session of the Poets," which appeared

about 1670. Nor did Sir Robert Howard, his associate, escape without his share of ridicule:

"Sir Robert Howard, call'd for over and over,
At length sent in Teague with a packet of news,
Wherein the sad knight, to his grief, did discover,
How Dryden had lately robb'd him of his Muse.

"Each man in the court was pleased with the theft,
Which made the whole family swear and rant,
Desiring, their Robin in the lurch being left,
The thief might be punished for his 'Wild Gallant.'

"Dryden, who one would have thought had more wit,
The censure of every man did disdain,
Pleading some pitiful rhimes he had writ
In praise of the Countess of Castlemaine."

The play itself contained too many of those prize-fights of wit, as Buckingham called them, in which the plot stood absolutely still, while two of the characters were showing the audience their dexterity at repartee. This error furnishes matter for a lively scene in the "Rehearsal."

The "Rival Ladies," acted in 1663, and published in the year following, was our author's next dramatic essay. It is a tragi-comedy; and the tragic scenes are executed in rhyme,—a style which Dryden anxiously defends, in a Dedication addressed to the Earl of Orrery, who had himself written several heroic plays. He cites against blank verse the universal practice of the most polished and civilized nations, the Spanish, the Italian, and the French; enumerates its advantages in restraining the luxuriance of the poet's imagination, and compelling him to labour long upon his clearest and richest thoughts: but he qualifies his general assertion by affirming, that heroic verse ought only to be applied to heroic situations and personages; and shows to most advantage in the scenes of argumentation, on which the doing or forbearing some considerable action should depend. Accordingly, in the "Rival Ladies," those scenes of the play which approach to comedy (for it contains none properly comic), are written in blank verse. The Dedication contains two remarkable errors: The author mistakes the title of "Ferrex and Porrex," a play written by Sackville Lord Buckhurst and Norton; and he ascribes to Shakspeare the first introduction of blank verse. The "Rival Ladies" seems to have been well received, and was probably of some advantage to the author.

In 1663-4, we find Dryden assisting Sir Robert Howard, who must be termed his friend, if not his patron, in the composition of a rhyming play, called the "Indian Queen." The versification of this piece, which is far more harmonious than that generally used by Howard, shows evidently, that our author had assiduously corrected the whole play, though it may be difficult to say how much of it was written by him. Clifford afterwards upbraided Dryden with having copied his Almanzor from the character of Montezuma; and it must be allowed, there is a striking resemblance between these two outrageous heroes, who carry conquest to any side they choose, and are restrained by no

human consideration, excepting the tears or commands of their mistress. But whatever share Dryden had in this piece, Sir Robert Howard retained possession of the title-page without acknowledgment, and Dryden nowhere gives himself the trouble of reclaiming his property, except in a sketch of the connexion between the "Indian Queen," and "Indian Emperor," where he simply states, that he wrote a part of the former. The "Indian Queen" was acted with very great applause, to which, doubtless, the scenery and dresses contributed not a little. Moreover, it presented battles and sacrifices on the stage, aërial dæmons singing in the air, and the god of dreams ascending through a trap; the least of which has often saved a worse tragedy. Evelyn, who witnessed this exhibition, has recorded, that the scenes were the richest ever seen in England, or perhaps, elsewhere, upon a public stage.*

The "Indian Queen" having been thus successful, Dryden was encouraged to engraft upon it another drama, entitled, the "Indian Emperor." It is seldom that the continuation of a concluded tale is acceptable to the public. The present case was an exception, perhaps, because the connexion between the "Indian Emperor" and its predecessor was neither close nor necessary. Indeed, the whole persons of the "Indian Queen" are disposed of by the bowl and dagger, at the conclusion of that tragedy, excepting Montezuma, who, with a second set of characters, the sons and daughters of those deceased in the first part, occupies the stage in the second play. The author might, therefore, have safely left the audience to discover the plot of the "Indian Emperor," without embarrassing them with that of the "Indian Queen." But to prevent mistakes, and principally, I should think, to explain the appearance of three ghosts, the only persons (if they can be termed such), who have any connexion with the former drama, Dryden took the precaution to print and disperse an argument of the play, in order, as the "Rehearsal" intimated, to insinuate into the audience some conception of his plot. The "Indian Emperor" was probably the first of Dryden's performances which drew upon him, in an eminent degree, the attention of the public. It was dedicated to Anne, Duchess of Monmouth, whom long afterward our author styled his first and best patroness. This lady, in the bloom of youth and wit, and married to a nobleman no less the darling of his father than of the nation, had it in her power effectually to serve Dryden, and doubtless exerted her influence in procuring him that rank in public opinion, which is seldom early attained without the sanction of those who lead the fashion in literature. The Duchess of Monmouth probably liked in the "Indian Emperor," not only the beauty of the numbers, and the frequently exquisite turn of the description, but also the introduction of incantations and apparitions, of which romantic style of writing she was a professed admirer. The "Indian Emperor" had the most ample success; and from the time of its representation, till the day of his death, our author, though often

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* Evelyn's Memoirs, 5th February, 1664.

rudely assailed, maintained the very pinnacle of poetical superiority against all his contemporaries.

The dreadful fire of London, in 1666, put a temporary stop to theatrical exhibitions, which were not permitted till the following Christmas. We may take this opportunity to review the effect which the rise of Dryden's reputation had upon his private fortune and habits of life.

While our author was the literary assistant of Sir Robert Howard, and the hired labourer of Herringman the bookseller, we may readily presume, that his pretensions and mode of living were necessarily adapted to that mode of life, into which he had descended by the unpopularity of his puritanical connexions. Even for some time after his connexion with the theatre, we learn, from a contemporary, that his dress was plain, at least, if not mean, and his pleasures moderate, though not inelegant.* But as his reputation advanced, he naturally glided into more expensive habits, and began to avail himself of the licence, as well as to partake of the pleasures, of the time. We learn from a poem of his enemy Milbourne, that Dryden's person was advantageous; and that, in the younger part of his life, he was distinguished by the emulous favour of the fair sex. And although it would not be edifying, were it possible, to trace instances of his success in gallantry, we may barely notice his intrigue with Mrs. Reeves, a beautiful actress, who performed in many of his plays. This amour was probably terminated before the fair lady's retreat to a cloister, which seems to have taken place before the representation of Otway's "Don Carlos," in 1676. Their connexion is alluded to in the "Rehearsal," which was acted in 1671. Bayes, talking of Amarillis, actually represented by Mrs. Reeves, says, "Aye, 'tis a pretty little rogue; she's my mistress; I knew her face would set off armour extremely: and to tell you true, I writ that part only for her." There follows an obscure allusion to some gallantry of our author in another quarter. But Dryden's amours were interrupted, if not terminated, in 1665, by his marriage.

Our author's friendship with Sir Robert Howard, and his increasing reputation, had introduced him to the family of the Earl of Berkshire, father to his friend. In the course of this intimacy, the poet gained the affections of Lady Elizabeth Howard, the Earl's eldest daughter, whom he soon afterwards married. The lampoons, by which Dryden's private character was assailed in all points, allege, that this marriage was formed under circumstances dishonourable to the lady. But of this there is no evidence; while the malignity of the reporters is evident and undisguised. We may however believe, that the match was not altogether agreeable to the noble family of Berkshire. Dryden, it is true, might, in point of descent, be admitted to form pretensions to

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* "I remember," says a correspondent of the "Gentleman's Magazine, for 1745," "plain John Dryden, before he paid his court with success to the great, in one uniform clothing of Norwich-drugget. I have eat tarts with him and Madam Reeves at the Mulberry garden, when our author advanced to a sword and a Chadreux wig."

Lady Elizabeth Howard; but his family, though honourable, was in a kind of disgrace, from the part which Sir Gilbert Pickering and Sir John Driden had taken in the Civil Wars: while the Berkshire family were remarkable for their attachment to the royal cause. Besides, many of the poet's relations were engaged in trade; and the alliance of his brothers-in-law, the tobacconist and stationer, if it was then formed, could not sound dignified in the ears of a Howard. Add to this a very important consideration.—Dryden had no chance of sharing the wealth of his principal relations, which might otherwise have been received as an atonement for the guilty confiscations by which it was procured. He had quarrelled with them, or they with him; his present possession was a narrow independence; and his prospects were founded upon literary success, always precarious, and then connected with circumstances of personal abasement, which rendered it almost disreputable. A noble family might be allowed to regret, that one of their members was chiefly to rely for the maintenance of her husband, her family, and herself, upon the fees of dedications, and occasional pieces of poetry, and the uncertain profits of the theatre.

Yet, as Dryden's manners were amiable, his reputation high, and his moral character unexceptionable, the Earl of Berkshire was probably soon reconciled to the match; and Dryden seems to have resided with his father-in-law for some time, since it is from the Earl's seat of Charlton, in Wiltshire, that he dates the Introduction to the "*Annus Mirabilis*," published in the end of 1667.

So honourable a connexion might have been expected to have advanced our author's prospects in a degree beyond what he experienced; but his father-in-law was poor, considering his rank, and had a large family, so that the portion of Lady Elizabeth was inconsiderable. Nor was her want of fortune supplied by patronage, or family influence. Dryden's preferment, as poet laureate, was due to, and probably obtained by, his literary character; nor did he ever receive any boon suitable to his rank, as son-in-law to an earl. But, what was worst of all, the parties did not find mutual happiness in the engagement they had formed. It is difficult for a woman of a violent temper and weak intellects, and such the lady seems to have been, to endure the apparently causeless fluctuation of spirits incident to one doomed to labour incessantly in the feverish exercise of the imagination. Unintentional neglect, and the inevitable relaxation, or rather sinking of spirit, which follows violent mental exertion, are easily misconstrued into capricious rudeness, or intentional offence; and life is embittered by mutual accusation, not the less intolerable bcause reciprocally just. The wife of one who is to gain his livelihood by poetry, or by any labour (if any there be) equally exhausting, must either have taste enough to relish her husband's performances, or good-nature sufficient to pardon his infirmities. It was Dryden's misfortune, that Lady Elizabeth had neither the one nor the other; and I dismiss this disagreeable subject by observing, that on no one occasion, when a sarcasm against matrimony could be introduced, has our author failed to season it with such bitterness, as spoke an inward consciousness of domestic misery.

During the period when the theatres were closed, Dryden seems to have written and published the "Annus Mirabilis," of which we spoke at the close of the last chapter. But he was also then labouring upon his "Essay of Dramatic Poesy." It was a singular trait in the character of our author, that by whatever motive he was directed in his choice of a subject, and his manner of treating it, he was, upon all occasions, alike anxious to persuade the public, that both the one and the other were the object of his free choice, founded upon the most rational grounds of preference. He had, therefore, no sooner seriously bent his thoughts to the stage, and distinguished himself as a composer of heroic plays, than he wrote his "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," in which he assumes, that the drama was the highest department of poetry; and endeavours to prove, that rhyming or heroic tragedies are the most legitimate offspring of the drama.

The subject is agitated in a dialogue between Lord Buckhurst, Sir Charles Sedley, Sir Robert Howard, and the author himself, under the feigned names of Eugenius, Lisideius, Crites, and Neander. This celebrated Essay was first published in the end of 1667, or beginning of 1668. The author revised it with an unusual degree of care, and published it anew in 1684, with a Dedication to Lord Buckhurst.

In the introduction of the dialogue, our author artfully solicits the attention of the public to the improved versification, in which he himself so completely excelled all his contemporaries; and contrasts the rugged lines and barbarous conceits of Cleveland with the more modern style of composition, where the thoughts were moulded into easy and significant words, superfluities of expression retrenched, and the rhyme rendered so properly a part of the verse, that it was led and guided by the sense, which was formerly sacrificed in attaining it. This point being previously settled, a dispute occurs concerning the alleged superiority of the ancient classic models of dramatic composition. This is resolutely denied by all the speakers, excepting Crites; the regulation of the unities is condemned, as often leading to greater absurdities than those they were designed to obviate; and the classic authors are censured for the cold and trite subjects of their comedies, the bloody and horrible topics of many of their tragedies, and their deficiency in painting the passion of love. From all this, it is justly gathered, that the moderns, though with less regularity, possess a greater scope for invention, and have discovered, as it were, a new perfection in writing. This debated point being abandoned by Crites, (or Howard), the partizan of the ancients, a comparison between the French and English drama is next introduced. Sedley, the celebrated wit and courtier, pleads the cause of the French, an opinion which perhaps was not singular among the favourites of Charles II. But the rest of the speakers unite in condemning the extolled simplicity of the French plots, as actual barrenness, compared to the variety and copiousness of the English stage; and their authors' limiting the attention of the audience and interest of the piece to a single principal personage, is censured as poverty of imagination, when opposed to the diversification

of characters exhibited in the *dramatis personæ* of the English poets. Shakspeare and Jonson are then brought forward, and contrasted with the French dramatists, and with each other. The former is extolled, as the man of all modern, and perhaps ancient, poets, who had the largest and most comprehensive soul, and intuitive knowledge of human nature; and the latter, as the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. But to Skakspeare, Dryden objects, that his comic sometimes degenerates into *clenches*, and his serious into bombast; to Jonson the sullen and saturnine character of his genius, his borrowing from the ancients, and the insipidity of his latter plays. The examen leads to the discussion of a point, in which Dryden had differed with Sir Robert Howard. This was the use of rhyme in tragedy. Our author had, it will be remembered, maintained the superiority of rhyming plays, in the Introduction to the "Rival Ladies." Sir Robert Howard, the catalogue of whose virtues did not include that of forbearance, made a direct answer to the arguments used in the Introduction; and while he studiously extolled the plays of Lord Orrery, as affording an exception to his general sentence against rhyming plays, he does not extend the compliment to Dryden, whose defence of rhyme was expressly dedicated to that noble author. Dryden, not much pleased, perhaps, at being left undistinguished in the general censure passed upon rhyming plays by his friend and ally, retaliates in the Essay, by placing in the mouth of Crites the arguments urged by Sir Robert Howard, and replying to them in the person of Neander. To the charge, that rhyme is unnatural, in consequence of the inverted arrangement of the words necessary to produce it, he replies, that, duly ordered, it may be natural in itself, and therefore not unnatural in a play; and that, if the objection be further insisted upon, it is equally conclusive against blank verse, or measure without rhyme. To the objection founded on the formal and uniform recurrence of the measure, he alleges the facility of varying it, by throwing the cadence upon different parts of the line, by breaking it into hemistiches, or by running the sense into another line, so as to make art and order appear as loose and free as nature.* Dryden even contends, that, for variety's sake, the pindaric measure might be admitted, of which Davenant set an example in the "Siege of Rhodes." But this licence, which was probably borrowed from the Spanish stage, has never succeeded elsewhere, except in operas. Finally, it is urged, that rhyme, the most noble verse, is alone fit for tragedies, the most noble species of composition; that, far from injuring a scene, in which quick repartee is necessary, it is the last perfection of wit to put it into numbers; and that, even where a trivial and common expression is replaced, from necessity, in the mouth of an important character, it receives, from the melody of versification, a dignity befitting the person

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* Sandford, a most judicious actor, is said, by Cibber, cautiously to have observed this rule, in order to avoid surfeiting the audience by the continual recurrence of rhyme.

that is to pronounce it. With this keen and animated defence of a mode of composition, in which he felt his own excellence, Dryden concludes the "Essay of Dramatic Poesy."

The publication of this criticism, the first that contained an express attempt to regulate dramatic writing, drew general attention, and gave some offence. Sir Robert Howard felt noways flattered at being made, through the whole dialogue, the champion of unsuccessful opinions: and a partiality to the depreciated blank verse seems to have been hereditary in his family. He therefore hasted to assert his own opinion against that of Dryden, in the preface to one of his plays, called the "Duke of Lerma," published in the middle of the year 1668. It is difficult for two friends to preserve their temper in a dispute of this nature; and there may be reason to believe that some dislike to the alliance of Dryden, as a brother-in-law, mingled with the poetical jealousy of Sir Robert Howard. The Preface to the "Duke of Lerma" is written in the tone of a man of quality and importance, who is conscious of stooping beneath his own dignity, and neglecting his graver avocations, by engaging in a literary dispute. Dryden was not likely, of many men, to brook this tone of affected superiority. He retorted upon Sir Robert Howard very severely, in a tract, entitled, the "Defence of the Essay on Dramatic Poesy," which he prefixed to the second edition of the "Indian Emperor," published in 1678. In this piece, the author mentions his antagonist as master of more than twenty legions of arts and sciences, in ironical allusion to Sir Robert's coxcombical affectation of universal knowledge, which had already exposed him to the satire of Shadwell.* He is also described in reference to some foolish appearance in the House of Commons, as having maintained a contradiction *in terminis*, in the face of three hundred persons. Neither does Dryden neglect to hold up to ridicule the slips in Latin and English grammar, which marked the offensive Preface to the "Duke of Lerma." And although he concludes, that he honoured his adversary's parts and person as much as any man living, and had so many particular obligations to him, that he should be very ungrateful not to acknowledge them to the world, yet the personal and contemptuous severity of the whole piece must have cut to the heart so proud a man as Sir Robert Howard. This quarrel between the baronet and the poet, who was suspected of having crutched-up many of his lame performances, furnished food for lampoon and amusement to the indolent wits of the day. But the breach between the brothers-in-law, though wide, proved fortunately not irreconcilable; and towards the end of Dryden's literary career, we find him again upon terms of friendship with the person by whom he had been befriended

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* Who drew Sir Robert in the character of Sir Positive Atall, in the "Sullen Lovers;" a foolish knight, that pretends to understand everything in the world, and will suffer no man to understand anything in his company; so foolishly positive, that he will never be convinced of an error, though never so gross. This character is supported with great humour.

at its commencement. Edward Howard, who, it appears, had entered as warmly as his brother into the contest with Dryden about rhyming tragedies, also seems to have been reconciled to our poet; at least he pronounced a panegyric on his translation of Virgil before it left the press, in a passage which is also curious, from the author ranking in the same line "the two elaborate poems of Blackmore and Milton." In testimony of total amnesty, the "Defence of the Essay" was cancelled; and it must be rare indeed to meet with an original edition of it, since Mr. Malone had never seen one.*

Dryden's fame, as an author, was doubtless exalted by the "Essay of Dramatic Poesy;" which showed, that he could not only write plays, but defend them when written. His circumstances rendered it necessary, that he should take the full advantage of his reputation to meet the increasing expense of a wife and family; and it was probably shortly after the Essay appeared, that our author entered into his memorable contract with the King's Company of players. The precise terms of this agreement have been settled by Mr. Malone from unquestionable evidence, after being the subject of much doubt and uncertainty. It is now certain, that, confiding in the fertility of his genius, and the readiness of his pen, Dryden undertook to write for the King's house no less than three plays in the course of the year. In consideration of this engagement, he was admitted to hold one share and a quarter in the profits of the theatre, which was stated by the managers to have produced him three or four hundred pounds, *communibus annis*. Either, however, the players became sensible, that, by urging their pensioner to continued drudgery, they in fact lessened the value of his labour, or Dryden felt himself unequal to perform the task he had undertaken; for the average number of plays which he produced, was only about half that which had been contracted for. The company, though not without grudging, paid the poet the stipulated share of profit; and the curious document, recovered by Mr. Malone, not only establishes the terms of the bargain, but that the players, although they complained of the laziness of their indented author, were jealous of their right to his works, and anxious to retain possession of him, and of them. It would have been well for Dryden's reputation, and perhaps not less productive to the company, had the number of his plays been still farther abridged; for, while we admire the facility that could produce five or six plays in three years, we lament to find it so often exerted to the sacrifice of the more essential qualities of originality and correctness.

Dryden had, however, made his bargain, and was compelled to fulfil it the best he might. As his last tragic piece, the "Indian Emperor," had been eminently successful, he was next to show the public that his talents were not limited to the buskin; and accordingly, late in 1667, was represented, the "Maiden Queen," a tragi-comedy, in

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* That now before me is prefixed to the second edition of the "Indian Emperor," 1668.

which, although there is a comic plot separate from the tragic design, our author boasts to have retained all that regularity and symmetry of parts which the dramatic laws require. The tragic scenes of the "Maiden Queen" were deservedly censured, as falling beneath the "Indian Emperor." They have neither the stately march of the heroic dialogue, nor, what we would be more pleased to have found in them, the truth of passion, and natural colouring, which characterized the old English drama. But the credit of the piece was redeemed by the comic part, which is a more light and airy representation of the fashionable and licentious manners of the time than Dryden could afterwards exhibit, excepting in "Marriage A-la-Mode." The king, whose judgment on this subject was unquestionable, graced the "Maiden Queen" with the title of *his play*; and Dryden insinuates that it would have been dedicated to him, had he had confidence to follow the practice of the French poets in like cases. At least, he avoided the solecism of inscribing the king's own play to a subject; and, instead of a dedication, we have a preface, in which the sovereign's favourable opinion of the piece is studiously insisted upon. Neither was the praise of Charles conferred without critical consideration; for he justly censured the concluding scene, in which Celadon and Florimel treat of their marriage in very light terms in presence of the Queen, who stands by, an idle spectator. This insult to Melpomene, and preference of her comic sister, our author acknowledges to be a fault, but seemingly only in deference to the royal opinion; for he instantly adds, that, in his own judgment, the scene was necessary to make the piece go off smartly, and was, in the estimation of good judges, the most diverting of the whole comedy.

Encouraged by the success of the "Maiden Queen," Dryden proceeded to revive the "Wild Gallant;" and, in deference to his reputation, it seems now to have been more favourably received than at its first representation.

The "Maiden Queen" was followed by the "Tempest," an alteration of Shakspeare's play of the same name, in which Dryden assisted Sir William Davenant. It seems probable that Dryden furnished the language, and Davenant the plan of the new characters introduced. They do but little honour to his invention, although Dryden has highly extolled it in his preface. The idea of a counter-part to Shakspeare's plot, by introducing a man who had never seen a woman, as a contrast to a woman who had never seen a man, and by furnishing Caliban with a sister monster, seems hardly worthy of the delight with which Dryden says he filled up the characters so sketched. In mixing his tints, Dryden did not omit that peculiar colouring, in which his age delighted. Miranda's simplicity is converted into indelicacy, and Dorinda talks the language of prostitution before she has ever seen a man. But the play seems to have succeeded to the utmost wish of the authors. It was brought out in the Duke's house, of which Davenant was manager, with all the splendour of scenic decoration of which he was inventor. The opening scene is described as

being particularly splendid, and the performance of the spirits, "with mops and mows," excited general applause. Davenant died before the publication of this piece, and his memory is celebrated in the preface.

Our author's next play, if it could be properly called his, was "Sir Martin Mar-all." This was originally a translation of "L'Etourdi" of Molière, executed by the Duke of Newcastle, famous for his loyalty, and his skill in horsemanship. Dryden availed himself of the noble translator's permission to improve and bring "Sir Martin Mar-all" forward for his own benefit. It was attended with the most complete success, being played four times at court, and above thirty times at the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields; a run chiefly attributed to the excellent performance of Nokes, who represented Sir Martin. The "Tempest" and "Sir Martin Mar-all" were both acted by the Duke's Company, probably because Dryden was in the one assisted by Sir William Davenant the manager, and because the other was entered in the name of the Duke of Newcastle. Of these two plays, "Sir Martin Mar-all" was printed anonymously in 1668. It did not appear with Dryden's name until 1697. The "Tempest," though acted before "Sir Martin Mar-all," was not printed until 1669-70. They are in the present, as in former editions, arranged according to the date of publication, which gives the precedence to "Sir Martin Mar-all," though last acted.

The "Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer," was Dryden's next composition. It is an imitation of "Le Feint Astrologus" of Corneille, which is founded upon Calderon's "El Astrologo Fingido." Several of the scenes are closely imitated from Molière's "Depit Amoureux." Having that lively bustle, intricacy of plot, and surprising situation, which the taste of the time required, and being enlivened by the characters of Wild-blood and Jacinta, the "Mock Astrologer" seems to have met a favourable reception in 1668, when it first appeared. It was printed in the same, or in the following year, and inscribed to the Duke of Newcastle, to whom Dryden had been indebted for the sketch of "Sir Martin Mar-all." It would seem, that this gallant and chivalrous peer was then a protector of Dryden, though he afterwards seems more especially to have patronized his enemy Shadwell; upon whose *northern* dedications, inscribed to the duke and his lady, our author is particularly severe. In the preface to the "Evening's Love," Dryden anxiously justifies himself from the charge of encouraging libertinism, by crowning his rake and coquette with success. But after he has arrayed all the authority of the ancient and modern poets, and has pleaded that these licentious characters are only made happy after being reclaimed in the last scene, we may be permitted to think, that more proper heroes may be selected than those, who, to merit the reward assigned them, must announce a violent and sudden change from the character they have sustained during five acts; and the attempt to shroud himself under authority of others, is seldom resorted to by Dryden when a cause is otherwise tenable. The excellent Evelyn,

who mentions seeing this play under the inaccurate title of the "Evening's Love," adds, "A foolish plot, and very profane; it affected me to see how much the stage was degenerated and polluted by the licentious times."* In this preface also he justified himself from the charge of plagiarism, by showing that the mere story is the least part either of the labour of the poet, or of the graces of the poem; quoting against his critics the expression of the king, who had said, he wished those, who charged Dryden with theft, would always steal him plays like Dryden's.

The "Royal Martyr," was acted in 1668-9, and printed in 1670. It is, in every respect, a proper heroic tragedy, and had a large share of the applause with which those pieces were then received. It abounds in bombast, but is not deficient in specimens of the sublime and of the tender. The preface is distinguished by that tone of superiority, which Dryden often assumed over the critics of the time. Their general observations he cuts short, by observing, that those who make them produce nothing of their own, or only what is more ridiculous than anything they reprehend. Special objections are refuted, by an appeal to classical authority. Thus the couplet,

> "And he, who servilely creeps after sense,
> Is safe, but ne'er will reach an excellence,"

is justified from the "*serpit humi tutus*" of Horace; and, by a still more forced derivation, the line,

> "And follow fate, which does too fast pursue,"

is said to be borrowed from Virgil,

> "*Eludit gyro interior sequiturque sequentem.*"

And he concludes by exulting, that, though he might have written nonsense, none of his critics had been so happy as to discover it. These indications of superiority, being thought to savour of vanity, had their share in exciting the storm of malevolent criticism, of which Dryden afterwards so heavily complained. "Tyrannic Love" is dedicated to the Duke of Monmouth; but it would seem the compliment was principally designed to his duchess. The duke, whom Dryden was afterwards to celebrate in very different strains, is, however, compared to an Achilles, or Rinaldo, who wanted only a Homer, or Tasso, to give him the fame due to him.

It was in this period of prosperity, of general reputation, of confidence in his genius, and perhaps of presumption (if that word can be applied to Dryden), that he produced those two very singular plays, the First and Second Parts of the "Conquest of Granada." In these models of the pure heroic drama the ruling sentiments of love and

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* Evelyn's Memoirs, 19th June, 1668.

honour are carried to the most passionate extravagance. And, to maintain the legitimacy of this style of composition, our author, ever ready to vindicate with his pen to be right, that which his timid critics murmured at as wrong, threw the gauntlet down before the admirers of the ancient English school, in the Epilogue to the "Second Part of the Conquest of Granada," and in the Defence of that Epilogue. That these plays might be introduced to the public with a solemnity corresponding in all respects to models of the rhyming tragedy, they were inscribed to the Duke of York, and prefaced by an "Essay upon Heroic Plays." They were performed in 1669-70, and received with unbounded applause. Before we consider the effect which they, and similar productions, produced on the public, together with the progress and decay of the taste for heroic dramas, we may first notice the effect which the ascendancy of our author's reputation had produced upon his situation and fortunes.

Whether we judge of the rank which Dryden held in society by the splendour of his titled and powerful friends, or by his connexions among men of genius, we must consider him as occupying, at this time, as high a station, in the very foremost circle, as literary reputation could gain for its owner. Independent of the notice with which he was honoured by Charles himself, the poet numbered among his friends most of the distinguished nobility. The great Duke of Ormond had already begun that connexion, which subsisted between Dryden and three generations of the house of Butler; Thomas Lord Clifford, one of the Cabal ministry, was uniform in patronizing the poet, and appears to have been active in introducing him to the king's favour; the Duke of Newcastle, as we have seen, loved him sufficiently to present him with a play for the stage; the witty Earl of Dorset, then Lord Buckhurst, and Sir Charles Sedley, admired in that loose age for the peculiar elegance of his loose poetry, were his intimate associates, as is evident from the turn of the "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," where they are speakers; Wilmot Earl of Rochester (soon to act a very different part) was then anxious to vindicate Dryden's writings, to mediate for him with those who distributed the royal favour, and was thus careful, not only of his reputation, but his fortune. In short, the first author of what was then held the first style of poetry, was sought for by all among the great and gay who wished to maintain some character for literary taste; a description which included all of the court of Charles whom nature had not positively incapacitated from such pretension. It was then Dryden enjoyed those genial nights described in the dedication of the "Assignation," when discourse was neither too serious nor too light, but always pleasant, and for the most part instructive; the raillery neither too sharp upon the present, nor too censorious upon the absent; and the cups such only as raised the conversation of the night, without disturbing the business of the morrow. He had not yet experienced the disadvantages attendant on such society, or learned how soon literary eminence becomes the object of detraction, of envy, of injury, even from those who can best feel its

merit, if they are discouraged by dissipating habits from emulating its flight, or hardened by perverted feeling against loving its possessors.

But, besides the society of these men of wit and pleasure, Dryden enjoyed the affection and esteem of the ingenious Cowley, who wasted his brilliant talents in the unprofitable paths of metaphysical poetry; of Waller and of Denham, who had done so much for English versification; of Davenant, as subtle as Cowley, and more harmonious than Denham, who, with a happier model, would probably have excelled both. Dryden was also known to Milton, though it may be doubted whether they justly appreciated the talents of each other. Of all the men of genius at this period, whose claims to immortality our age has admitted, Butler alone seems to have been the adversary of our author's reputation.

While Dryden was thus generally known and admired, the advancement of his fortune bore no equal progress to the splendour of his literary fame. Something was, however, done to assist it. The office of royal historiographer had become vacant in 1666 by the decease of James Howell, and in 1668 the death of D'Avenant opened the situation of poet laureat. These two offices, with a salary of 200*l.* paid quarterly, and the celebrated annual butt of canary, were conferred upon Dryden 18th August, 1670. The grant bore a retrospect to the term after Davenant's demise, and is declared to be to "John Dryden, master of arts, in consideration of his many acceptable services theretofore done to his present Majesty, and from an observation of his learning and eminent abilities, and his great skill and elegant style, both in verse and prose." Thus was our author placed at the head of the literary class of his countrymen, so far as that high station could be conferred by the favour of the monarch.

If we compute Dryden's share in the theatre at 300*l.* annually, which is lower than it was rated by the actors in their petition; if we make, at the same time, some allowance for those presents which authors of that time received upon presenting dedications, or occasional pieces of poetry; if we recollect, that Dryden had a small landed property, and that his wife, Lady Elizabeth, had probably some fortune or allowance, however trifling, from her family,—I think we will fall considerably under the mark in computing the poet's income, during this period of prosperity, at 600*l.* or 700*l.* annually; a sum more adequate to procure all the comforts, and many of the luxuries, of life, than thrice the amount at present. We must, at the same time, recollect, that, though Dryden is nowhere censured for extravagance, poets are seldom capable of minute economy, and that Lady Elizabeth was by education, and perhaps by nature, unfitted for supplying her husband's deficiencies. These halcyon days, too, were but of short duration. The burning of the theatre, in 1670, greatly injured the poet's income from that quarter; his pension, like other appointments of the household establishment of Charles II., was very irregularly paid; and thus, if his income was competent in amount, the payment was precarious and uncertain.

Leaving Dryden for the present in the situation which we have described, and which he occupied during the most fortunate period of his life, the next chapter may open with an account of the public taste at this time, and of the revolution in it which shortly took place.

CHAPTER III.

Heroic Plays—The Rehearsal—Marriage A-la-Mode—The Assignation—Controversy with Clifford—with Leigh—with Ravenscroft—Massacre of Amboyna—State of Innocence.

THE rage for imitating the French stage, joined to the successful efforts of our author, had now carried the heroic or rhyming tragedy to its highest pitch of popularity. The principal requisites of such a drama are summed up by Dryden in the two first lines of the "Orlando Furioso,"

> "*Le Donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori*
> *Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese.*"

The story thus partaking of the nature of a romance of chivalry, the whole history of the play necessarily turned upon love and honour, those supreme idols of the days of knight-errantry. The love introduced was not of that ordinary sort, which exists between persons of common mould; it was the love of Amadis and Oriana, of Oroondates and Statira; that love which required a sacrifice of every wish, hope, and feeling unconnected with itself, and which was expressed in the language of prayer and of adoration. It was that love which was neither to be chilled by absence, nor wasted by time, nor quenched by infidelity. No caprice in the object beloved entitled her slave to emancipate himself from her fetters; no command, however unreasonable, was to be disobeyed; if required by the fair mistress of his affections, the hero was not only to sacrifice his interest, but his friend, his honour, his word, his country, even the gratification of his love itself, to maintain the character of a submissive and faithful adorer. Much of this mystery is summed up in the following speech of Almahide to Almanzor, and his answer; from which it appears that a lover of the true heroic vein never thought himself so happy, as when he had an opportunity of thus showing the purity and disinterestedness of his passion. Almanzor is commanded by his mistress to stay to assist his rival, the king, her husband. The lover very naturally asks,

> "*Almanz.* What recompence attends me, if I stay?
> *Almah.* You know I am from recompence debarr'd,
> But I will grant your merit a reward;
> Your flame's too noble to deserve a cheat
> And I too plain to practise a deceit.

I no return of love can ever make,
But what I ask is for my husband's sake:
He, I confess, has been ungrateful too,
But he and I are ruin'd if you go:
Your virtue to the hardest proof I bring;—
Unbribed, preserve a mistress and a king.
Almanz. I'll stop at nothing that appears so brave:
I'll do't, and now I no reward will have.
You've given my honour such an ample field,
That I may die, but that shall never yield."

The king, however, not perhaps understanding this nice point of honour, grows jealous, and wishes to dismiss the disinterested ally, whom his spouse's beauty had enlisted in his service. But this did not depend upon him; for Almanzor exclaims,

"*Almanz.* I wonnot go; I'll not be forced away:
I came not for thy sake; nor do I stay.
It was the queen who for my aid did send;
And 'tis I only can the queen defend:
I, for her sake, thy sceptre will maintain;
And thou, by me, in spite of thee, shalt reign."

The most applauded scenes in these plays turned upon nice discussions of metaphysical passion, such as in the days of yore were wont to be agitated in the courts and parliaments of love. Some puzzling dilemma, or metaphysical abstraction, is argued between the personages on the stage, whose dialogue, instead of presenting a scene of natural passion, exhibits a sort of pleading, or combat of logic, in which each endeavours to defend his own opinion by catching up the idea expressed by the former speaker, and returning him his illustration, or simile, at the rebound; and where the lover hopes everything from his ingenuity, and trusts nothing to his passion. Thus, in the following scene between Almanzor and Almahide, the solicitations of the lover and the denials of the queen, are expressed in the very carte and tierce of poetical argumentation:

"*Almah.* My light will sure discover those who talk.—
Who dares to interrupt my private walk?
Almanz. He, who dares love, and for that love must die,
And, knowing this, dares yet love on, am I.
Almah. That love which you can hope, and I can pay,
May be received and given in open day:
My praise and my esteem you had before;
And you have bound yourself to ask no more.
Almanz. Yes, I have bound myself; but will you take
The forfeit of that bond, which force did make?
Almah. You know you are from recompence debarr'd;
But purest love can live without reward.
Almanz. Pure love had need be to itself a feast.
For, like pure elements, 'twill nourish least.
Almah. It therefore yields the only pure content;
For it, like angels, needs no nourishment.
To eat and drink can no perfection be
All appetite implies necessity.

Almanz. 'Twere well, if I could like a spirit live;
But, do not angels food to mortals give?
What if some demon should my death foreshow,
Or bid me change, and to the Christians go;
Will you not think I merit some reward,
When I my love above my life regard?
Almah. In such a case your change must be allow'd;
I would myself dispense with what you vow'd.
Almanz. Were I to die that hour when I possess,
This minute shall begin my happiness.
Almah. The thoughts of death your passion would remove
Death is a cold encouragement to love.
Almanz. No; from my joys I to my death would run,
And think the business of my life well done:
But I should walk a discontented ghost,
If flesh and blood were to no purpose lost."

This kind of Amabæan dialogue was early ridiculed by the ingenious author of "Hudibras."* It partakes more of the Spanish than of the French tragedy, although it does not demand that the parody shall be so very strict, as to re-echo noun for noun, or verb for verb, which Lord Holland gives us as a law of the age of Lope de Vega.† The English heroic poet did enough if he displayed sufficient point in the dialogue, and alertness in adopting and retorting the image presented by the preceding speech; though, if he could twist the speaker's own words into an answer to his argument, it seems to have been held the more ingenious mode ef confutation.

While the hero of a rhyming tragedy was thus undoubtedly sub-

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* In "Repartees between Cat and Puss at a caterwauling, in the modern heroic way:"

"*Cat.* Forbear, foul ravisher, this rude address;
Canst thou at once both injure and caress?
Puss. Thou hast bewitch'd me with thy powerful charms,
And I, by drawing blood, would cure my harms.
C. He that does love would set his heart a tilt,
Ere one drop of his lady's should be spilt.
P. Your wounds are but without, and mine within:
You wound my heart, and I but prick your skin;
And while your eyes pierce deeper than my claws,
You blame the effect of which you are the cause.
C. How could my guiltless eyes your heart invade,
Had it not first been by your own betray'd?
Hence 'tis, my greatest crime has only been
(Not in mine eyes, but yours) in being seen.
P. I hurt to love, but do not love to hurt.
C. That's worse than making cruelty a sport.
P. Pain is the foil of pleasure and delight,
That sets it off to a more noble height.
C. He buys his pleasure at a rate too vain,
That takes it up beforehand of his pain.
P. Pain is more dear than pleasure when 'tis past.
C. But grows intolerable if it last," &c.,

† Life of Lope de Vega.

missive in love, and dexterous in applying the metaphysical logic of amorous jurisprudence, it was essential to his character that he should possess all the irresistible courage and fortune of a *preux chevalier*. Numbers, however unequal, were to be as chaff before the whirlwind of his valour; and nothing was to be so impossible, that, at the command of his mistress, he could not with ease achieve. When, in the various changes of fortune which such tragedies demand, he quarrelled with those whom he had before assisted to conquer,

> "Then to the vanquish'd part his fate he led,
> The vanquish'd triumph'd, and the victor fled."

The language of such a personage, unless when engaged in argumentative dialogue with his mistress, was, in all respects, as magnificent and inflated as might beseem his irresistible prowess. Witness the famous speech of Almanzor:

> "*Almanz.* To live!
> If from thy hands alone my death can be,
> I am immortal, and a god to thee.
> If I would kill thee now, thy fate's so low,
> That I must stoop ere I can give the blow:
> But mine is fix'd so far above thy crown,
> That all thy men,
> Piled on thy back, can never pull it down:
> But, at my ease, thy destiny I send,
> By ceasing from this hour to be thy friend.
> Like heaven, I need but only to stand still,
> And, not concurring to thy life, I kill.
> Thou canst no title to my duty bring;
> I'm not thy subject, and my soul's thy king.
> Farewell. When I am gone,
> There's not a star of thine dare stay with me:
> I'll whistle thy tame fortune after me;
> And whirl fate with me wheresoe'er I fly,
> As winds drive storms before them in the sky."

It was expected by the audience, that the pomp of scenery, and bustle of action, in which such tremendous heroes were engaged, should in some degree correspond with their lofty sentiments and superhuman valour. Hence solemn feasts, processions, and battles by sea and land, filled the theatre. Hence, also, the sudden and violent changes of fortune, by which the hero and his antagonists are agitated through the whole piece. Fortune has been often compared to the sea; but in a heroic play, her course resembled an absolute Bay of Biscay, or Race of Portland, disturbed by a hundred contending currents and eddies, and never continuing a moment in one steady flow.

That no engine of romantic surprise might be wanting, Dryden contends, that the dramatist, as he is not confined to the probable in character, so he is not limited by the bounds of nature in the action, but may let himself loose to visionary objects, and to the represent-

of such things as, not depending upon sense, leave free exercise for the imagination. Indeed, if ghosts, magicians, and demons, might with propriety claim a place anywhere, it must be in plays which throughout disclaim the common rules of nature, both in the incidents narrated, and the agents interested.

Lastly, the action of the heroic drama was to be laid, not merely in the higher, but in the very highest walk of life. No one could with decorum aspire to share the sublimities which it annexed to character, except those made of the "porcelain clay of the earth," dukes, princes, kings, and kaisars. The matters agitated must be of moment, proportioned to their characters and elevated station, the fate of cities and the fall of kingdoms.

That the language, as well as actions and character of the *dramatis personæ*, might be raised above the vulgar, their sentiments were delivered in rhyme, the richest and most ornate kind of verse, and the farthest removed from ordinary colloquial diction. Dryden has himself assigned the following reasons:—"The plot, the characters, the wit, the passions, the descriptions, are all exalted above the level of common converse, as high as the imagination of the poet can carry them, with proportion to verisimility. Tragedy, we know, is wont to image to us the minds and fortunes of noble persons, and to portray these exactly; heroic rhyme is nearest nature, as being the noblest kind of modern verse.

'*Indignatur enim privatus, et prope socco*
Dignis, carminibus, narrari cœna Thyestæ'—

says Horace: and in another place,

'*Effutire leves indigna tragœdia versus.*'

Blank verse is acknowledged to be too low for a poem, nay more, for a paper of verses; but if too low for an ordinary sonnet, how much more for tragedy, which is by Aristotle, in the dispute betwixt the epic poesy and the dramatic, for many reasons he there alleges, ranked above it."

When we consider these various essentials of a rhyming play, we may perhaps, without impropriety, define it to be a metrical romance of chivalry in form of a drama. The hero is a perfect knight-errant, invincible in battle, and devoted to his dulcinea by a love, subtle, metaphysical, and abstracted from all the usual qualities of the instinctive passion; his adventures diversified by splendid descriptions of bull-feasts, battles, and tournaments; his fortune undergoing the strangest, most causeless, and most unexpected varieties; his history chequered by the marvellous interference of ghosts, spectres, and hell itself; his actions affecting the change of empires, and his co-agents being all lords, and dukes, and noble princes, in order that their rank might, in some slight degree, correspond to the native exaltation of the champion's character.

The reader may smile at this description, and feel some surprise how compositions, involving such gross absurdities, were tolerated by an audience, having pretence to taste and civilization. But something may be said for the heroic drama.

Although the manners were preposterous, and the changes of fortune rapid and improbable, yet the former often obtained a sublime, though forced elevation of sentiment; and the latter, by rapidity of transition and of contrast, served in no slight degree to interest as well as to surprise the audience. If the spectators were occasionally stunned with bombast, or hurried and confused by the accumulation of action and intrigue, they escaped the languor of a creeping dialogue, and the tedium of a barren plot, of which the termination is descried full three acts before it can be attained. Besides, if these dramas were sometimes extravagant, beautiful passages often occurred to atone for these sallies of fury. In others, ingenuity makes some amends for the absence of natural feeling, and the reader's fancy is pleased at the expense of his taste. In representation, the beauty of the verse, assisted by the enunciation of such actors as Betterton and Mohun, gilded over the defects of the sense, and afforded a separate gratification. The splendour of scenery also, in which these plays claimed a peculiar excellence, afforded a different but certain road to popular favour; and thus this drama, with all its faults, was very far from wanting the usual requisites for success. But another reason for its general popularity may be sought in a certain correspondence with the manners of the time.

Although in Charles the Second's reign the age of chivalry was totally at an end, yet the sentiments, which had ceased to be motives of action, were not so obsolete as to sound totally strange to the public ear. The French romances of the lower class, such as "Cassandra," "Cleopatra," &c., were the favourite pastime of the ladies, and retained all the extravagances of chivalrous sentiment, with a double portion of tedious form and metaphysical subtlety. There were occasionally individuals romantic enough to manage their correspondence and amours on this exploded system. The admired Mrs. Philips carried on an extensive correspondence with ingenious persons of both sexes, in which she called herself *Orinda*, and her husband, Mr. Wogan, by the title of *Antenor*. Shadwell, an acute observer of nature, in one of his comedies, describes a formal coxcomb of this class, who courts his mistress out of the "Grand Cyrus," and rejoices in an opportunity of showing that his passion could subsist in despite of her scorn. It is probable he had met with such an original in the course of his observation. The *Précieuses* of Molière, who affected a strange mixture of the romantic heroine and modern fine lady, belong to the same class of oddities, and had their prototypes under the observation of the satirist. But even those who were above such foppery had been early taught to read and admire the conceits of Donne, and the metaphysical love-poems of Cowley. They could not object to the quaint and argumentative dialogues which we have described; for the course

studies had formed their taste upon a model equally artificial and fantastic; and thus, what between real excellence, and false brilliancy, the age had been accustomed not only to admit, but to admire heroic plays.

Perhaps even these favourable circumstances, of taste and opportunity, would hardly have elevated the rhyming drama so high in the public opinion, had it been supported by less powers than those of Dryden, or even by equal talents less happily adapted to that style of composition. His versification flowed so easily, as to lessen the bad effects of rhyme in dialogue; and, at the same time, abounded with such splendid and sonorous passages, as, in the mouth of a Betterton, awed into silence even those critics, who could distinguish that the tumid and unnatural was sometimes substituted for the heroic and sublime. The felicity of his language, the richness of his illustrations, and the depth of his reflections, often supplied what the scene wanted in natural passion: and, while enjoying the beauty of his declamation, it was only on cool reflection that the hearer discovered that it had passed upon him for the expression of genuine feeling. Even then, the pleasure which he actually received from the representation, was accepted as an apology for the more legitimate delight, which the rules of criticism entitled him to have expected. To these considerations, the high rank and consequent influence, which Dryden already held in the fashionable and literary circles of the time, must unquestionably be added. Nor did he fail to avail himself of his access to the great, whose applause was often cheaply secured by a perusal of the piece, previous to its being presented to the public; and thus it afterwards came forth with all the support of a party eminent for rank and literature, already prepossessed in its favour.

For all these reasons, the heroic drama appears to have gradually risen in reputation, from the return of Charles till about the year 1670-1, when Dryden's "Conquest of Granada" was received with such enthusiastic applause. The reputation of the poet himself kept pace with that of his favourite style of composition; and though posterity has judged more correctly, it may be questioned, whether "Tyrannic Love" and the "Conquest of Granada" did not place Dryden higher in public esteem, in 1670, than his "Virgil" and "Fables" in 1700. He was, however, now to experience the inconveniences of elevation, and to sustain an attack upon the style of writing which he had vindicated and practised, as well as to repel the efforts of rivals, who boasted of outstripping him in the very road to distinction, which he had himself pointed out. The Duke of Buckingham attacked the system of rhyming plays from the foundation; Leigh, Clifford, and other scribblers, wrote criticisms upon those of our author in particular; and Elkanah Settle was able to form a faction heretical enough to maintain that he could write such compositions better than Dryden.

The witty farce of the "Rehearsal" is said to have been meditated by its authors (for it was the work of several hands), so early as a year

or two after the Restoration, when Sir William Davenant's operas and tragedies were the favourite exhibitions. The ostensible author was the witty George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, whose dissipation was marked with shades of the darkest profligacy. He lived an unprincipled statesman, a fickle projector, a wavering friend, a steady enemy; and died a bankrupt, an outcast, and a proverb. The Duke was unequal to that masculine satire, which depends for edge and vigour upon the conception and expression of the author. But he appears to have possessed considerable powers of discerning what was ludicrous; and enough of subordinate humour to achieve an imitation of colloquial peculiarities, or a parody upon remarkable passages of poetry,—talents differing as widely from real wit, as mimicry does from true comic action. Besides, Buckingham, as a man of fashion and a courtier, was master of the *persiflage*, or jargon of the day, so essentially useful as the medium of conveying light humour. He early distinguished himself as an opponent of the rhyming plays. Those of the Howards, of Davenant, and others, the first which appeared after the Reformation, experienced his opposition. At the representation of the "United Kingdoms," by the Honourable Edward Howard, a brother of Sir Robert, the Duke's active share in damning the piece was so far resented by the author and his friends, that he narrowly escaped sanguinary proofs of their displeasure. This specimen of irritation did not prevent his meditating an attack upon the whole body of modern dramatists; in which he had the assistance of several wits, who either respected the ancient drama, or condemned the modern style, or were willing to make common cause with a Duke against a poet-laureat. These were, the witty author of Hudibras, who, while himself starving, amused his misery by ridiculing his contemporaries; Sprat, afterwards Bishop of Rochester, then Buckingham's chaplain; and Martin Clifford, afterwards Master of the Chapter House, the author of a very scurrilous criticism upon some of Dryden's plays, to be mentioned hereafter. By the joint efforts of this coalition, the "Rehearsal" was produced; a lively piece, which continued to please, long after the plays which it parodied were no longer real or acted, and although the zest of the personal satire which it contained had evaporated in the lapse of time. This attack on the reigning taste was long threatened ere it was made; and the precise quarter to be assailed was varied more than once. Prior says, that Buckingham suspended his attack till he was certain that the Earl of Dorset would not "rehearse on him again." The principal character was termed, in the original sketch, Bilboa, a name expressing a traveller and soldier, under which Sir Robert Howard, or Sir William Davenant, was designated. The author of the "Key to the Rehearsal" affirms, that Sir Robert was the person meant; but Mr. Malone is of opinion, that Davenant is clearly pointed out by the brown-paper patch, introduced in ridicule of that which Davenant really wore upon his nose. Yet as this circumstance was rete[illegible] when the character was assigned to Dryden, the poet of t[illegible]

hearsal" may be considered as in some degree a knight of the shire, representing all the authors of the day, and uniting in his person their several absurd peculiarities. The first sketch of the "Rehearsal" was written about 1664, but the representation was prevented by the theatres being shut upon the plague and fire of London. When they were again opened, the plays of the Howards, of Stapleton, &c., had fallen into contempt by their own demerit, and were no longer a well-known or worthy object of ridicule. Perhaps also there was a difficulty in bringing the piece forward, while, of the persons against whom its satire was chiefly directed, Davenant was manager of the one theatre, and Dryden a sharer in the other. The death of Davenant probably removed this difficulty: and the success of Dryden in the heroic drama; the boldness with which he stood forth, not only as a practiser, but as the champion of that peculiar style; a certain provoking tone of superiority in his critical essays, which, even when flowing from conscious merit, is not easily tolerated by contemporaries; and perhaps his situation as poet laureat, a post which has been always considered as a fair butt for the shafts of ridicule,—induced Buckingham to resume the plan of his satire, and to place Dryden in the situation designed originally for Davenant or Howard. That the public might be at no loss to assign the character of Bayes to the laureat, his peculiarities of language were strictly copied. Lacy the actor was instructed by Buckingham himself how to mimic his voice and manner; and, in performing the part, he wore a dress exactly resembling Dryden's usual habit. With these ill-natured precautions, the "Rehearsal" was, in 1671, brought forward for the first time by the King's Company. As, besides the reputation of Dryden, that of many inferior poets, but greater men, was assailed by the Duke's satire, it would appear that the play met a stormy reception on the first night of representation. The friends of the Earl of Orrery, of Sir Robert Howard and his brothers, and other men of rank, who had produced heroic plays, were loud and furious in their opposition. But, as usually happens, the party who laughed, got the advantage over that which was angry, and finally drew the audience to their side. When once received, the success of the "Rehearsal" was unbounded. The very popularity of the plays ridiculed aided the effect of the satire, since everybody had in their recollection the originals of the passages parodied. Besides the attraction of personal severity upon living and distinguished literary characters and the broad humour of the burlesque, the part of Bayes had a claim to superior praise, as drawn with admirable attention to the foibles of the poetic tribe. His greedy appetite for applause; his testy repulse of censure or criticism; his inordinate and overwhelming vanity, not unmixed with a vein of flattery to those who he hopes will gratify him by returning it in kind; finally, that extreme, anxious, and fidgeting attention to the minute parts of what even in whole is scarce worthy of any,—are, I fear, but too appropriate qualities of the "*genus vatum.*"

Almost all Dryden's plays, including those on which he set the

highest value, and which he had produced, with confidence, as models of their kind, were parodied in the "Rehearsal." He alone contributed more to the farce than all the other poets together. His favourite style of comic dialogue, which he had declared to consist rather in a quick sharpness of dialogue than in delineations of humour, is paraphrased in the scene between Tom Thimble and Prince Prettyman; the lyrics of his astral spirits are cruelly burlesqued in the song of the two lawful Kings of Brentford, as they descend to repossess their throne; above all, Almanzor, his favourite hero, is parodied in the magnanimous Drawcansir; and, to conclude, the whole scope of heroic plays, with their combats, feasts, processions, sudden changes of fortune, embarrassments of chivalrous love and honour, splendid verse and unnatural rants, are so held up to ridicule, as usually to fix the resemblance upon some one of his own dramas. The "Wild Gallant," the "Maiden Queen," and "Tyrannic Love," all furnish parodies, as do both parts of the "Conquest of Granada," which had been frequently acted before the representation of the "Rehearsal," though not printed till after. What seems more strange, the play of "Marriage A-la-Mode" is also alluded to, although it was neither acted nor printed till 1673, a year after the appearance of the "Rehearsal." But there being no parody of any particular passage, although the plot and conduct of the piece are certainly ridiculed, it seems probable, that, as Dryden often showed his plays in manuscript to those whom he accounted his patrons, the plan of "Marriage A-la-Mode" may have transpired in the circles which Buckingham frequented, who may thus have made it the subject of satire by anticipation.

It is easy to conceive what Dryden must have felt, at beholding his labours, and even his person, held up to public derision, on the theatre where he had so often triumphed. But he was too prudent to show outward signs of resentment; and in conversation allowed, that the farce had a great many good things in it, though so severe against himself. "Yet I cannot help saying," he added, in a well-judged tone of contempt, "that Smith and Johnson are two of the coolest and most insignificant fellows I ever met with upon the stage."* Many years afterwards he assigned nearly the same reason to the public for not replying to the satire. But though he veiled his resentment under this mask of indifference at the time, he afterwards avowed, that the exquisite character of Zimri in "Absalom and Achitophel," was laboured with so much felicitous skill as a requital in kind to the author of the "Rehearsal."

The ridicule cast upon heroic plays by the "Rehearsal," did not prevent their being still exhibited. They contained many passages of splendid poetry, which continued to delight the audience after they had laughed at Buckingham's parody. But the charm began to dissolve; and from the time of that representation, they seem

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* Spence's Anecdotes.

gradually, but perceptibly, to have declined in favour. Accordingly, Dryden did not trust to his powers of numbers in his next play, but produced the "Marriage A-la-Mode," a tragi-comedy, or rather a tragedy and comedy, the plots and scenes of which are intermingled, for they have no natural connexion with each other. The state- intrigue bears evident marks of hurry and inattention; and it is at least possible, that Dryden originally intended it for the subject of a proper heroic play, but, startled at the effect of Buckingham's satire, hastily added to it some comic scenes, either lying by him, or com- posed on purpose. The higher or tragic plot is not only grossly inartificial and improbable, but its incidents are so perplexed and obscure, that it would have required much more action to detail them intelligibly. Even the language has an abridged appearance, and favours the idea, that the tragic intrigue was to have been extended into a proper heroic play, instead of occupying a spare corner in a comedy. But to make amends, the comic scenes are executed with spirit, and in a style resembling those in the "Maiden Queen." They contained much witty and fashionable raillery; and the character of Melantha is pronounced by Cibber to exhibit the most complete system of female foppery that could possibly be crowded into the tortured form of a fine lady. It was admirably acted by Mrs. Monfort, afterwards Mrs. Verbruggen. The piece thus supported was eminently successful; a fortunate circumstance for the King's Company, who were then in distressful circumstances. Their house in Drury Lane had been destroyed by fire, after which disaster they were compelled to occupy the old theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, lately deserted by the rival company for a splendid one in Dorset Gardens. From a pro- logue which our author furnished, to be spoken at the opening of this house of refuge, it would seem, that even the scenes and properties of the actors had been furnished by the contributions of the nobility. Perhaps their present reduced situation was an additional reason with Dryden for turning his attention to comedy, which required less splendour of exhibition and decoration than the heroic plays.

"Marriage A-la-Mode" was inscribed to Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, in strains of adulation not very honourable to the dedicator. But as he expresses his gratitude for Rochester's care, not only of his repu- tation, but of his fortune; for his solicitude to overcome the fatal modesty of poets, which leads them to prefer want to importunity; and, finally, for the good effects of his mediation in all his concerns at court; it may be supposed some recent benefit, perhaps an active share in procuring the appointment of poet laureat, had warmed the heart of the author towards the patron. The dedication was well received, and the compliment handsomely acknowledged, as we learn by a letter from Dryden to Rochester, where he says, that the shame of being so much overpaid for an ill dedication, made him almost repent of his address. But he had shortly afterwards rather more substantial reasons for regretting his choice of a patron.

The same cause for abstaining from tragic composition still re-

maining in force, Dryden, in 1672, brought forward a comedy, called "The Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery." The plot was after the Spanish model. The author seems to have apprehended, and experienced, some opposition, on account of this second name; and although he deprecates, in the epilogue, the idea of its being a party play, or written to gratify the Puritans with satire at the expense of the Catholics; yet he complains, in the dedication, of the number of its enemies, who came prepared to damn it on account of the title. The Duke of York having just made public profession of the Roman faith, any reflections upon it were doubtless watched with a jealous eye. But, though guiltless in this respect, the "Assignation" had worse faults. The plot is but indifferently conducted, and was neither enlivened with gay dialogue, nor with striking character: the play, accordingly, proved unsuccessful in the representation. Yet, although upon reading the "Assignation," we cannot greatly wonder at this failure, still, considering the plays which succeeded about the same time, we may be disposed to admit, that the weight of a party was thrown into the scale against its reception. Buckingham, who shortly afterwards published a revised edition of the "Rehearsal," failed not to ridicule the absurd and coarse trick, by which the enamoured prince prevents his father from discovering the domino of his mistress, which had been left in his apartment. And Dryden's rivals and enemies, now a numerous body, hailed, with malicious glee, an event which seemed to foretell the decay of his popularity.

The "Assignation" was published in 1673, and inscribed, by Dryden, to his much honoured friend Sir Charles Sedley. There are some acrimonious passages in this dedication, referring to the controversies in which the author had been engaged; and, obscure as these have become, it is the biographer's duty to detail and illustrate them.

It cannot be supposed, that the authors of the time saw with indifference Dryden's rapid success, and the measures which he had taken, by his critical essays, to guide the public attention, and to fix it upon himself and the heroic plays, in which he felt his full superiority. But no writer of the time could hope to be listened to by the public, if he entered a claim of personal competition against a poet so celebrated. The defence of the ancient poets afforded a less presumptuous and more favourable pretext for taking the field, and for assailing Dryden's writings, and avenging the slight notice he had accorded to his contemporaries, under the colour of defending the ancients against his criticism. The "Essay of Dramatic Poesy" afforded a pretence for commencing this sort of warfare. In that piece, Dryden had pointed out the faults of Shakspeare, Jonson, and Fletcher, with less ceremony than the height of their established reputation appeared to demand from a young author. But the precedence which he undauntedly claimed for the heroic drama, and, more generally, the superiority of the plays of Dryden's own age, whether tragic or comic, over those of the earlier part of the seven-

the way, by his "Bartholomew Fair," and similar pieces, are noticed, and censured, as unfit for a polished audience. The characters in what may be termed genteel comedy are reviewed, and restricted to the Truewit of Jonson's "Silent Woman," the Mercutio of Shakspeare, and Fletcher's Don John in the "Chances." Even this last celebrated character, he observes, is better carried on in the modern alteration of the play, than in Fletcher's original; a singular instance of Dryden's liberality of criticism, since the alteration of the "Chances" was made by that very Duke of Buckingham, from whom he had just received a bitter and personal offence. Dryden proceeds to contend, that the living poets, from the example of a gallant king and sprightly court, have learned, in their comedies, a tone of light discourse and raillery, in which the solidity of English sense is blended with the air and gaiety of their French neighbours; in short, that those who call Jonson's the golden age of poetry, have only this reason, that the audience were then content with acorns, because they knew not the use of bread. In all this criticism there was much undeniable truth; but sufficient weight was not given to the excellences of the old school, while their faults were ostentatiously and invidiously enumerated. It would seem that Dryden, perhaps from the rigour of a puritanical education, had not studied the ancient dramatic models in his youth, and had only begun to read them with attention when it was his object rather to depreciate than to emulate them. But the time came when he did due homage to their genius.

Meanwhile this avowed preference of his own period excited the resentment of the older critics, who had looked up to the era of Shakspeare as the golden age of poetry; and no less that of the playwrights of his own standing, who pretended to discover that Dryden designed to establish less the reputation of his age, than of himself individually, upon the ruined fame of the ancient poets. They complained, that, as the wild bull in the Vivarambla of Granada,

> "Monarch-like he ranged the listed field,
> And some he trampled down, and some he kill'd."

Many, therefore, advancing under pretence of vindicating the fame of the ancients, gratified their spleen by attacking that of Dryden, and strove less to combat his criticisms, than to criticise his productions. We shall have too frequent occasion to observe, that there was, during the reign of Charles II., a semi-barbarous virulence of controversy, even upon abstract points of literature, which would be now thought injudicious and unfair, even by the newspaper advocates of contending factions. A critic of that time never deemed he had so effectually refuted the reasoning of his adversary, as when he had said something disrespectful of his talents, person, or moral character. Thus, literary contest was embittered by personal hatred, and truth was so far from being the object of the combatants, that even victory was tasteless unless obtained by the disgrace and degradation of the antagonist.

teenth century, was asserted, not only distinctly, but irreverently, in the Epilogue to the "Conquest of Granada:"

"They, who have best succeeded on the stage,
Have still conform'd their genius to their age.
Thus Jonson did mechanic humour show,
When men were dull, and conversation low.
Then comedy was faultless, but 'twas coarse;
Cobb's tankard was a jest, and Otter's horse.
And as their comedy, their love was mean;
Except, by chance, in some one labour'd scene,
Which must atone for an ill-written play,
They rose, but at their height could seldom stay.
Fame then was cheap, and the first comer sped;
And they have kept it since, by being dead.
But, were they now to write, when critics weigh
Each line, and every word, throughout a play,
None of them, no not Jonson in his height,
Could pass, without allowing grains for weight.
Think it not envy, that these truths are told;
Our poet's not malicious, though he's bold.
'Tis not to brand them, that their faults are shown,
But, by their errors, to excuse his own.
If love and honour now are higher raised,
'Tis not the poet, but the age is praised.
Wit's now arrived to a more high degree
Our native language more refined and free.
Our ladies and our men now speak more wit
In conversation, than those poets writ.
Then, one of these is, consequently, true;
That what this poet writes come short of you,
And imitates you ill (which most he fears),
Or else his writing is not worse than theirs.
Yet, though you judge (as sure the critics will),
That some before him writ with greater skill,
In this one praise he has their fame surpast,
To please an age more gallant than the last."

The daring doctrine laid down in these obnoxious lines, our author ventured to maintain, in what he has termed a "Defence of the Epilogue, or an Essay on the Dramatic Poetry of the last age." It is subjoined to the "Conquest of Granada;" and, as that play was not printed till after the "Rehearsal," it serves to show how little Dryden's opinions were altered, or his tone lowered, by the success of that witty satire. It was necessary, he says, either not to print the bold epilogue, which we have quoted, or to show that he could defend it. He censures decidedly the antiquated language, irregular plots, and anachronisms of Shakspeare and Fletcher; but his main strength seems directed against Jonson. From his works he selects several instances of harsh, inelegant, and even inaccurate diction. In describing manners, he claims for the modern writers a decided superiority over the poets of the earlier age, when there was less gallantry, and when the authors were not admitted to the best society. The manners of their low, or Dutch school of comedy, in which Jonson led

This reflection may serve to introduce a short detail of the abusive controversies in which it was Dryden's lot to be engaged.

One of those, who most fiercely attacked our author's system and opinions, was Matthew Clifford, already mentioned as engaged in the "Rehearsal." At what precise time he began his "Notes upon Dryden's Poems, in Four Letters," or how they were originally published, is uncertain. The last of the letters is dated from the Charter House, 1st July, 1672, and is signed with his name: probably the others were written shortly before. The only edition now known was printed along with some "Reflections on the Hind and Panther, by another Hand" (Tom Brown), in 1687. If these letters were not actually printed in 1672, they were probably successively made public by transcripts handed about in the coffee-houses, which was then the usual mode of circulating lampoons and pieces of satire. Although Clifford was esteemed a man of wit and a scholar, his style is rude, coarse, and ungentlemanlike, and the criticism is chiefly verbal. The letters were written successively, at different periods; for Clifford, in the last, complains that he cannot extort an answer; and therefore seems to conceive, that his arguments are unanswerable.

There were several other pamphlets, and fugitive pieces, published against Dryden at the same time. One of them, entitled "The Censure of the Rota on Mr. Dryden's Conquest of Granada," was printed at Oxford in 1673. This was followed by a similar piece, entitled "A Description of the Academy of Athenian Virtuosi, with a Discourse held there in Vindication of Mr. Dryden's Conquest of Granada against the Author of the Censure of the Rota." And a third, called "A Friendly Vindication of Mr. Dryden from the Author of the Censure of the Rota," was printed at Cambridge. All these appeared previous to the publication of the "Assignation." The first, as Wood informs us, was written by Richard Leigh, educated at Queen's College, Oxford, where he entered in 1665, and was probably resident when this piece was there published. He was afterwards a player in the Duke's Company, but must be carefully distinguished from the celebrated comedian of the same name. It seems likely that he wrote also the second tract, which is a continuation of the first. Both are in a frothy, flippant style of raillery. The Cambridge Vindication seems to have been written by a different hand, though in the same taste. It is singular in bringing a charge against our author, which has been urged by no other antagonist; for he is there upbraided with exhibiting in his comedies the persons and follies of living characters.

The friends and admirers of Dryden did not see with indifference these attacks upon his reputation; for he congratulates himself in the Dedication to the "Assignation" upon having found defenders even among strangers, alluding probably to a tract by Mr. Charles Blount, entitled "Mr. Dryden Vindicated, in answer to the Friendly Vindication of Mr. Dryden, with Reflections on the Rota." This piece is written with all the honest enthusiasm of youth in defence of that genius,

which has excited its admiration. In his address to Sedley, Dryden notices these attacks upon him with a supreme degree of contempt. In other respects, the dedication is drawn with the easy indifference of one accustomed to the best society, towards the authority of those who presumed to judge of modern manners, without having access to see those of the higher circles. The picture which it draws of the elegance of the convivial parties of the wits in that gay time, has been quoted a few pages higher.

I know not if it be here worth while to mention a petty warfare between Dryden and Edward Ravenscroft, an unworthy scribbler, who wrote plays, or rather altered those of Shakspeare, and imitated those of Molière. This person, whether from a feud which naturally subsisted between the two rival theatres, or from envy and dislike to Dryden personally, chose in the Prologue to the "Citizen turned Gentleman," acted at the Duke's house in 1672, to level some sneers at the heroic drama, which affected particularly the "Conquest of Granada," then acting with great applause. Ravenscroft's play, which is a bald translation from the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" of Molière, was successful, chiefly owing to the burlesque procession of Turks employed to dub the citizen a Mamamouchi, or Paladin. Dryden, with more indignation than the occasion warranted, retorted, in the Prologue to the "Assignation," by the following attack on Ravenscroft's jargon and buffoonery:

> "You must have Mamamouchi, such a fop
> As would appear a monster in a shop;
> He'll fill your pit and boxes to the brim,
> Where, ramm'd in crowds, you see yourselves in him.
> Sure there's some spell, our poet never knew,
> In *Hullibabilah de*, and *Chu, chu, chu*;
> But *Marababah sahem* most did touch you;
> That is, Oh how we love the Mamamouchi!
> Grimace and habit sent you pleased away;
> You damn'd the poet, and cried up the play."

About this time, too, the actresses in the King's Theatre, to vary the amusements of the house, represented "Marriage A-la-Mode" in men's dresses. The Prologue and Epilogue were furnished by Dryden and in the latter, mentioning the projected union of the theatres,—

> "All the women most devoutly swear,
> Each would be rather a poor actress here,
> Than to be made a Mamamouchi there."

Ravenscroft, thus satirized, did not fail to exult in the bad success of the "Assignation," and celebrated his triumph in some lines of a Prologue to the "Careless Lovers," which was acted in the vacation succeeding the ill fate of Dryden's play. And with this *Te Deum*, on the part of Ravenscroft, ended a petty controversy, which gives him his only title to be named in the life of an English classic.

From what has been detailed of these disputes we may learn, that, even at this period, the laureat's wreath was not unmingled with thorns; and that if Dryden still maintained his due ascendancy over the common band of authors, it was not without being occasionally under the necessity of descending into the arena against very inferior antagonists.

In the course of these controversies, Dryden was not idle, though he cannot be said to have been worthily or fortunately employed; his muse being lent to the court, who were at this time anxious to awake the popular indignation against the Dutch. It is a characteristic of the English nation, that their habitual dislike against their neighbours is soon and easily blown into animosity. But, although Dryden chose for his theme the horrid massacre of Amboyna, and fell to the task with such zeal, that he accomplished it in a month, his play was probably of little service to the cause in which it was written. The story is too disgusting to produce the legitimate feelings of pity and terror, which tragedy should excite: the black-hole of Calcutta would be as pleasing a subject. The character of the Hollanders, as there represented, is too grossly vicious and detestable to give the least pleasure. They are neither men, nor even devils; but a sort of lubber fiends, compounded of cruelty, avarice, and brutal debauchery, like Dutch swabbers possessed by demons. But of this play the author has himself admitted, that the subject is barren, the persons low, and the writing not heightened by any laboured scenes: and, without attempting to contradict this modest prescription, we may dismiss the tragedy of "Amboyna." It was dedicated to Lord Clifford of Chudleigh, an active member of the Cabal administration of Charles II.; but who, as a Catholic, on the Test Act being passed, resigned his post of Lord High Treasurer, and died shortly afterwards. There is great reason to think, that this nobleman had essentially favoured Dryden's views in life. On a former occasion, he had termed Lord Clifford a better Mæcenas than the friend of Horace; and, in the present dedication, he mentions the numerous favours received through so many years, as forming one continued act of his patron's generosity and goodness; so that the excess of his gratitude had led the poet to receive those benefits, as the Jews received their law, with mute wonder, rather than with outward and ceremonious acclamation. These sentiments of obligation he continued, long after Lord Clifford's death, to express in terms equally glowing; so that we may safely do this statesman's memory the justice to record him as an active and discerning patron of Dryden's genius.

In the course of 1673, our author's pen was engaged in a task, which may be safely condemned as presumptuous, though that pen was Dryden's. It was no other than that of a new-modelling the "Paradise Lost" of Milton into a dramatic poem, called the "State of Innocence, or the Fall of Man." The coldness with which Milton's mighty epic was received upon the first publication is almost proverbial. The character of the author, obnoxious for his share in the

usurped government; the turn of the language so different from that of the age; the seriousness of a subject, so discordant with its lively frivolities—gave to the author's renown the slowness of growth with the permanency of the oak. Milton's merit, however, had not escaped the eye of Dryden. He was acquainted with the author, perhaps even before the Restoration; and who can doubt Dryden's power of feeling the sublimity of the "Paradise Lost," even had he himself not assured us, in the prefatory essay to his own piece, that he accounts it "undoubtedly, one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime poems, which either this age or nation has produced?" We are, therefore, to seek for the motive which could have induced him, holding this opinion, "to gild pure gold, and set a perfume on the violet." Dennis has left a curious record upon this subject:—"Dryden," he observes, "in his Preface before the 'State of Innocence,' appears to have been the first, those gentlemen excepted whose verses are before Milton's poem, who discovered in so public a manner an extraordinary opinion of Milton's extraordinary merit. And yet Mr. Dryden at that time knew not half the extent of his excellence, as more than twenty years afterwards he confessed to me, and is pretty plain from his writing the 'State of Innocence.'" Had he known the full extent of Milton's excellence, Dennis thought he would not have ventured on this undertaking, unless he designed to be a foil to him: "but they," he adds, "who knew Mr. Dryden, knew very well, that he was not of a temper to design to be a foil to any one."* We are therefore to conclude, that it was only the hope of excelling his original, admirable as he allowed it to be, which impelled Dryden upon this unprofitable and abortive labour; and we are to examine the improvements which Dryden seemed to meditate, or, in other words, the differences between his taste and that of Milton.

And first we may observe, that the difference in their situations affected their habits of thinking upon poetical subjects. Milton had retired into solitude, if not into obscurity, relieved from everything like external agency either influencing his choice of a subject, or his mode of treating it; and, in consequence, instead of looking abroad to consult the opinion of his age, he appealed only to the judge which Heaven had implanted within him, when he was endowed with severity of judgment, and profusion of genius. But the taste of Dryden was not so independent. Placed by his very office at the head of what was fashionable in literature, he had to write for those around him, rather than for posterity; was to support a brilliant reputation in the eye of the world; and is often found boasting of his intimacy with those who led the taste of the age, and frequently quoting the

> "*tamen me*
> *Cum magnis vixisse, invita fatebitur usque*
> *Invidia.*"

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* Dennis's Letters, quoted by Malone.

It followed, that Dryden could not struggle against the tide into which he was launched, and that, although it might be expected from his talents that he should ameliorate the reigning taste, or at least carry those compositions which it approved, to their utmost pitch of perfection, it could not be hoped that he should altogether escape being perverted by it, or should soar so superior to all its prejudices, as at once to admit the super-eminent excellence of a poem, which ran counter to these in so many particulars.

The versification of Milton, according to the taste of the times, was ignoble, from its supposed facility. Dryden was, we have seen, so much possessed with this prejudice, as to pronounce blank verse unfit even for a fugitive paper of poetry. Even in his later and riper judgment, he affirms that, whatever pretext Milton might allege for the use of blank verse, "his own particular reason is plainly this,—that rhyme was not his talent; he had neither the ease of doing it, nor the graces of it: which is manifest in his 'Juvenilia,' or verses written in his youth, where his rhyme is always constrained and forced, and comes hardly from him, at an age when the soul is most pliant, and the passion of love makes almost every man a rhymer, though not a poet." The want of the dignity of rhyme was therefore, according to his idea, an essential deficiency in the "Paradise Lost." According to Aubrey, Dryden communicated to Milton his intention of adding this grace to his poem; to which the venerable bard gave a contemptuous consent, in these words: "Ay, you may *tag* my verses if you will." Perhaps few have read so far into the "State of Innocence" as to discover that Dryden did not use this licence to the uttermost, and that several of the scenes are not tagged with rhyme.

Dryden at this period engaged in a research recommended to him by "a noble wit of Scotland," as he terms Sir George Mackenzie, the issue of which, in his apprehension, pointed out farther room for improving upon the epic of Milton. This was an inquiry into the "turn of words and thoughts" requisite in heroic poetry. These "turns," according to the definition and examples which Dryden has given us, differ from the points of wit, and quirks of epigram, common in the metaphysical poets, and consist in a happy, and at the same time a natural recurrence of the same form of expression, melodiously varied. Having failed in his search after these beauties in Cowley, the darling of his youth, "I consulted," says Dryden, "a greater genius (without offence to the manes of that noble author), I mean—Milton; but as he endeavours everywhere to express Homer, whose age had not arrived to that fineness, I found in him a true sublimity, lofty thoughts, which were clothed with admirable Grecisms, and ancient words, which he had been digging from the mines of Chaucer and Spenser, and which, with all their rusticity, had somewhat of venerable in them. But I found not there neither that for which I looked." This judgment Addison has proved to be erroneous, by quoting from Milton the most beautiful example of a turn of words which can be found in English

poetry.* But Dryden, holding it for just, conceived doubtless that, in his "State of Innocence," he might exert his skill successfully, by supplying the supposed deficiency, and for relieving those "flats of thought" which he complains of, where Milton, for a hundred lines together, runs on in a "track of Scripture;" but which Dennis more justly ascribes to the humble nature of his subject in those passages. The graces, also, which Dryden ventured to interweave with the lofty theme of Milton, were rather those of Ovid than of Virgil, rather turns of verbal expression than of thought. Such is that conceit which met with censure at the time:

> "Seraph and cherub, careless of their charge,
> And wanton, in full ease now live at large;
> Unguarded leave the passes of the sky,
> And all dissolved in hallelujahs lie."

"I have heard," said a petulant critic, "of anchovies dissolved in sauce; but never of an angel dissolved in hallelujahs." But this raillery Dryden rebuffs with a quotation from Virgil:

> "*Invadunt urbem, somno vinoque sepultam.*"

It might have been replied, that Virgil's analogy was familiar and simple, and that of Dryden was far-fetched and startling by its novelty.

The majesty of Milton's verse is strangely degraded in the following speeches, which precede the rising of Pandæmonium. Some of the

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* "With thee conversing, I forget all time,
All seasons, and their change; all please alike:
Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds: pleasant the sun,
When first on this delightful land he spreads
His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
Glist'ring with dew: fragrant the fertile earth
After soft show'rs, and sweet the coming on
Of grateful evening mild: then, silent night,
With this her solemn bird, and this fair moon,
And these the gems of heaven, her starry train:
But neither breath of morn, when she ascends
With charms of earliest birds; nor rising sun
On this delightful land; nor herb, fruit, flower,
Glist'ring with dew; nor fragrance after show'rs;
Nor grateful evening mild; nor silent night,
With this her solemn bird; nor walk by moon;
Or glittering starlight, without thee is sweet."

"The variety of images in this passage is infinitely pleasing, and the recapitulation of each particular image, with a little varying of the expression, makes one of the finest turns of words that I have ever seen; which I rather mention, because Mr. Dryden has said, in his Preface to Juvenal, that he could meet with no turn of words in Milton."—*Tatler*, Nos. 114, 115.

couplets are utterly flat and bald, and, in others, the balance of point and antithesis is substituted for the simple sublimity of the original:

"*Moloch.* Changed as we are, we're yet from homage free
We have, by hell, at least gain'd liberty:
That's worth our fall; thus low though we are driven,
Better to rule in hell, than serve in heaven.
Lucifer. There spoke the better half of Lucifer!
Asmoday. 'Tis fit in frequent senate we confer,
And then determine how to steer our course;
To wage new war by fraud, or open force,
The doom's now past, submission were in vain.
Mol. And were it not, such baseness I disdain;
I would not stoop, to purchase all above,
And should contemn a power, whom prayer could move,
As one unworthy to have conquer'd me.
Beelzebub. Moloch, in that all are resolved, like thee.
The means are unproposed; but 'tis not fit
Our dark divan in public view should sit;
Or what we plot against the Thunderer,
The ignoble crowd of vulgar devils hear.
Lucif. A golden palace let be raised on high;
To imitate? No, to outshine the sky.
All mines are ours, and gold above the rest;
Let this be done; and quick as 'twas exprest."

I fancy the reader is now nearly satisfied with Dryden's improvements on Milton. Yet some of his alterations have such peculiar reference to the taste and manners of his age, that I cannot avoid pointing them out. Eve is somewhat of a coquette even in the state of innocence. She exclaims,—

"from each tree
The feather'd kind press down to look on me;
The beasts, with up-cast eyes, forsake their shade,
And gaze, as if I were to be obey'd.
Sure, I am somewhat which they wish to be,
And cannot,—I myself am proud of me."

Upon receiving Adam's addresses, she expresses, rather unreasonably in the circumstances, some apprehensions of his infidelity; and, upon the whole, she is considerably too knowing for the primitive state. The same may be said of Adam, whose knowledge in school divinity, and use of syllogistic argument, Dryden, though he found it in the original, was under no necessity to have retained.

The "State of Innocence," as it could not be designed for the stage, seems to have been originally intended as a mere poetical prolusion; for Dryden, who was above affecting such a circumstance, tells us, that it was only made public, because, in consequence of several hundred copies, every one gathering new faults, having been dispersed without his knowledge, it became at length a libel on the author, who was forced to print a correct edition in his own defence. As the incidents and language were ready composed by Milton, we are not surprised

when informed, that the composition and revision were completed in a single month. The critics having assailed the poem even before publication, the author has prefixed an "Essay upon Heroic Poetry and Poetic Licence;" in which he treats chiefly of the use of metaphors, and of the legitimacy of machinery.

The dedication of the "State of Innocence," addressed to Mary of Este, Duchess of York, is a singular specimen of what has been since termed the celestial style of inscription. It is a strain of flattery in the language of adoration; and the elevated station of the princess is declared so suited to her excellence, that Providence has only done justice to its own works in placing the most perfect work of heaven where it may be admired by all beholders. Even this flight is surpassed by the following:—"'Tis true, you are above all mortal wishes; no man desires impossibilities, because they are beyond the reach of nature. To hope to be a god, is folly exalted into madness; but, by the laws of our creation, we are obliged to adore him, and are permitted to love him too at human distance. 'Tis the nature of perfection to be attractive; but the excellency of the object refines the nature of the love. It strikes an impression of awful reverence; 'tis indeed that love which is more properly a zeal than passion. 'Tis the rapture which anchorites find in prayer, when a beam of the divinity shines upon them; that which makes them despise all worldly objects; and yet 'tis all but contemplation. They are seldom visited from above: but a single vision so transports them, that it makes up the happiness of their lives. Mortality cannot bear it often: it finds them in the eagerness and height of their devotion; they are speechless for the time that it continues, and prostrate and dead when it departs." Such eulogy was the taste of the days of Charles, when ladies were deified in dedications, and painted as Venus or Diana upon canvas. In our time, the elegance of the language would be scarcely held to counterbalance the absurdity of the compliments.

Lee, the dramatic writer, an excellent poet, though unfortunate in his health and circumstances, evinced his friendship for Dryden, rather than his judgment, by prefixing to the "State of Innocence" a copy of verses, in which he compliments the author with having refined the ore of Milton. Dryden repaid this favour by an epistle, in which he beautifully apologizes for the extravagances of his friend's poetry, and consoles him for the censure of those cold judges, whose blame became praise when they accused the warmth which they were incapable of feeling.*

Having thus brought the account of our author's productions down to 1674, from which period we date a perceptible change in his taste and mode of composition, I have only to add, that his private situation was probably altered to the worse, by the burning of the King's

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* This epistle was prefixed to "Alexander the Great;" a play, the merits and faults of which are both in extreme.

Theatre, and the debts contracted in rebuilding it. The value of his share in that company must consequently have fallen far short of what it was originally. In other respects, he was probably nearly in the same condition as in 1672. The critics, who assailed his literary reputation, had hitherto spared his private character; and, excepting Rochester, whose malignity towards Dryden now began to display itself, he probably had not lost one person whom he had thought worthy to be called a friend. Lee, who seems first to have distinguished himself about 1672, was probably then added to the number of his intimates. Milton died shortly before the publication of the "State of Innocence;" and we may wish in vain to know his opinion of that piece; but if tradition can be trusted, he said, perhaps on that undertaking, that Dryden was a good rhymer, but no poet. Blount, who had signalized himself in Dryden's defence, was now added to the number of his friends. This gentleman dedicated his "Religio Laici" to Dryden in 1683, as his much-honoured friend; and the poet speaks of him with kindness and respect in 1696, three years after his unfortunate and violent catastrophe.

Dryden was, however, soon to experience the mutability of the friendship of wits and courtiers. A period was speedily approaching, when the violence of political faction was to effect a breach between our author and many of those with whom he was now intimately connected; indeed, he was already entangled in the quarrels of the great, and sustained a severe personal outrage, in consequence of a quarrel with which he had little individual concern.

CHAPTER IV.

Dryden's Controversy with Settle—with Rochester—He is assaulted in Rose Street—Aureng-Zebe—Dryden meditates an Epic Poem—All for Love—Limberham—Œdipus—Troilus and Cressida—The Spanish Friar—Dryden supposed to be in opposition to the Court.

"THE State of Innocence" was published in 1674, and "Aureng-Zebe," Dryden's next tragedy, appeared in 1675. In the interval, he informs us, his ardour for rhyming plays had considerably abated. The course of study which he imposed on himself, doubtless led him to this conclusion. But it is also possible, that he found the peculiar facilities of that drama had excited the emulation of very inferior poets, who, by dint of show, rant, and clamorous hexameters, were likely to divide with him the public favour. Before proceeding, therefore, to state the gradual alteration in Dryden's own taste, we must perform the task of detailing the literary quarrels in which he was at this period engaged. The chief of his rivals was Elkanah Settle, a person afterwards utterly contemptible; but who, first by the strength of a party at court, and afterwards by a faction in the state,

was, for a time, buoyed up in opposition to Dryden. It is impossible to detail the progress of the contest for public favour between these two ill-matched rivals, without noticing at the same time Dryden's quarrel with Rochester, who appears to have played off Settle in opposition to him, as absolutely, and nearly as successfully, as Settle ever played off the literal puppets, for which, in the ebb of his fortune, he wrote dramas.

In the year 1673, Dryden and Rochester were on such friendly terms, that our poet inscribed to his lordship his favourite play of "Marriage A-la-Mode;" not without acknowledgment of the deepest gratitude for favours done to his fortune and reputation. The dedication, we have seen, was so favourably accepted by Rochester, that the reception called forth a second tribute of thanks from the poet to the patron. But at this point, the interchange of kindness and of civility received a sudden and irrecoverable check. This was partly owing to Rochester's fickle and jealous temper, which induced him alternately to raise and depress the men of parts whom he loved to patronize; so that no one should ever become independent of his favour, or so rooted in the public opinion, as to be beyond the reach of his satire; but it may also in part be attributed to Dryden's attachment to Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, afterwards Duke of Buckingham, then Rochester's rival in wit and court-favour, and from whom he had sustained a deadly affront, on an occasion which, as the remote cause of a curious incident in Dryden's life, I have elsewhere detailed in the words of Sheffield himself. Rochester, who was branded as a coward in consequence of this transaction, must be reasonably supposed to entertain a sincere hatred against Mulgrave; with whom he had once lived on such friendly terms, as to inscribe to him an Epistle on their mutual poems. But, as his nerves had proved unequal to a personal conflict with his brother peer, his malice prompted the discharge of his spleen upon those men of literature whom his antagonist cherished and patronized. Among these Dryden held a distinguished situation; for, about 1675 he was, as we shall presently see, sufficiently in Sheffield's confidence to correct and revise that nobleman's poetry; and in 1676 dedicated to him the tragedy of "Aureng-Zebe," as one who enjoyed not only his favour, but his love and conversation. Thus Dryden was obnoxious to Rochester, both as holding a station among the authors of the period, grievous to the vanity of one, who aimed, by a levelling and dividing system, to be the tyrant, or at least the dictator, of wit; and also as the friend, and even the confidant, of Mulgrave, by whom the witty profligate had been baffled and humiliated. Dryden was therefore to be lowered in the public opinion; and for this purpose, Rochester made use of Elkanah Settle, whom, though he gratified his malice by placing him in opposition to Dryden, he must, in his heart, have thoroughly despised.*

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* Dennis's account of these feuds, though not strictly accurate, is lively, and too curious to be suppressed. "Nothing," says Dennis, "is more certain, than

This playwright, whom the jealous spleen of a favourite courtier, and the misjudging taste of a promiscuous audience, placed for some time in so high a station, came into notice in 1671, on the representation of his first play, "Cambyses, King of Persia," which was played six nights successively. This run of public favour gave Rochester some pretence to bring Settle to the notice of the king; and, through the efforts of this mischievous wit, joined to the natural disposition of the people to be carried by show, rant, and tumult, Settle's second play, "The Empress of Morocco," was acted with unanimous and overpowering applause for a month together. To add to Dryden's mortification, Rochester had interest enough to have this tragedy of one whom he had elevated into the rank of his rival, first acted at Whitehall by the lords and ladies of the court; an honour which had never been paid to any of Dryden's compositions, however more justly entitled to it, both from intrinsic merit, and by the author's situation as poet-laureate. Rochester contributed a prologue upon this brilliant occasion, to add still more grace to Settle's triumph; but what seems yet more extraordinary, and has, I think, been unnoticed in all accounts of the controversy, Mulgrave,* Rochester's rival and the friend of Dryden, did the same homage to "The Empress of Morocco." From

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that Mr. Settle, who is now (1717) the city poet, was formerly a poet of the court. And at what time was he so? Why, in the reign of King Charles the Second, when that court was more gallant and more polite than ever the English court perhaps had been before; when there was at that court the present and the late Duke of Buckingham, the late Earl of Dorset, Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, famous for his wit and poetry, Sir Charles Sedley, Mr. Saville, Mr. Buckley, and several others.

"Mr. Settle's first tragedy, 'Cambyses, King of Persia,' was acted for three weeks together. The second, which was 'The Empress of Morocco,' was acted for a month together; and was in such high esteem both with the court and town, that it was acted at Whitehall before the king by the gentlemen and ladies of the court; and the prologue, which was spoken by the Lady Betty Howard, was writ by the famous Lord Rochester. The bookseller who printed it, depending upon the prepossession of the town, ventured to distinguish it from all the plays that had been ever published before; for it was the first play that ever was sold in England for two shillings, and the first that ever was printed with cuts. The booksellers at that time of day had not discovered so much of the weakness of their gentle readers as they have done since, nor so plainly discovered that fools, like children, are to be drawn in by gewgaws.—Well; but what was the event of this great success? Mr. Settle began to grow insolent, as any one may see, who reads the epistle dedicatory to 'The Empress of Morocco.' Mr. Dryden, Mr. Shadwell, and Mr. Crowne, began to grow jealous; and they three in confederacy wrote 'Remarks on the Empress of Morocco.' Mr. Settle answered them; and according to the opinion which the town then had of the matter (for I have utterly forgot the controversy), had by much the better of them all. In short, Mr. Settle was then a formidable rival to Mr. Dryden; and I remember very well, that not only the town, but the university of Cambridge, was very much divided in their opinions about the preference that ought to be given to them; and in both places the younger fry inclined to Elkanah."

* Lord Mulgrave wrote the prologue when Settle's play was first acted at court. Lord Rochester's was written for the second occasion; both were spoken by the beautiful Lady Elizabeth Howard.

the king's private theatre, "The Empress of Morocco" was transferred, in all its honours, to the public stage in Dorset Garden, and received with applause corresponding to the expectation excited by its favour at Whitehall. While the court and city were thus worshipping the idol which Rochester had set up, it could hardly be expected of poor Settle, that he should be first to discern his own want of desert. On the contrary, he grew presumptuous on success; and when he printed his performance, the dedication to the Earl of Norwich was directly levelled against the poet-laureate, who termed it the "most arrogant, calumniatory, ill-mannered, and senseless preface he ever saw." And, to add gall to bitterness, the bookseller thought "The Empress of Morocco" worthy of being decorated with engravings, and sold at the advanced price of two shillings; being the first drama advanced to such honourable distinction.* Moreover, the play is ostentatiously stated in the title to be written by Elkanah Settle, Servant to his Majesty; an addition which the laureate had assumed with greater propriety.

If we are asked the merit of a performance which made such an impression at the time, we may borrow an expression applied to a certain orator, and say, that "The Empress of Morocco" must have acted to the tune of a good heroic play. It had all the outward and visible requisites of splendid scenery, prisons, palaces, fleets, combats of desperate duration and uncertain issue, assassinations, a dancing tree, a rainbow, a shower of hail, a criminal executed, and hell itself opening upon the stage. The rhyming dialogue too, in which the play was written, had an imperative and tyrannical sound; and to a foreigner, ignorant of the language, might have appeared as magnificent as that of Dryden. But it must raise our admiration that the witty court of Charles could patiently listen to a "tale told by an idiot, full of noise and fury, signifying nothing," and give it a preference over the poetry of Dryden. The following description of a hailstorm in Africa, will vindicate our wonder:

> "This morning, as our eyes we upward cast,
> The desert regions of the air lay waste.
> But straight, as if it had some penance bore,
> A mourning garb of thick black clouds it wore.
> But on the sudden,
> Some aëry demon changed its form, and now
> That which look'd black above, look'd white below;
> The clouds dishevell'd, from their crusted locks,
> Something like gems coin'd out of crystal rocks.

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* A copy of this rare edition (the gift of my learned friend, the Rev. Henry White of Lichfield) is now before me. The engravings are sufficiently paltry; and had the play been published even in the present day, it would have been accounted dear at two shillings. The name of the publisher is William Cadman, the date 1673. This play I had afterwards the pleasure to give to my friend, Mr. John Kemble, who had not met that copy, even in his extensive research after dramatic rarities.

The ground was with this strange bright issue, spread,
As if heaven in affront to nature had
Design'd some new-found tillage of its own,
And on the earth these unknown seeds had sown.
Of these I reach'd a grain, which to my sense
Appear'd as cold as virgin-innocence;
And like that too, (which chiefly I admired)
Its ravish'd whiteness with a touch expired.
At the approach of heat, this candied rain
Dissolved to its first element again.
Muley H. Though showers of hail Morocco never see,
Dull priest, what does all this portend to me?
Ham. It does portend—
Muley. What?
Ham. That the fates design—
Muley. To tire me with impertinence like thine."

Such were the strains once preferred to the magnificent verses of Dryden: whose very worst bombast is sublimity compared to them. To prove which, the reader need only peruse the Indian's account of the Spanish fleet in the "Indian Emperor," to which the above lines are a parallel; each being the description of an object familiar to the audience, but new to the describer. The poet felt the disgraceful preference more deeply than was altogether becoming; but he had levelled his powers, says Johnson, when he levelled his desires to those of Settle, and placed his happiness in the claps of multitudes. The moral may be carried yet farther; for had not Dryden stooped to call to the aid of his poetry the auxiliaries of scenery, gilded truncheons, and verse of more noise than meaning, it is impossible his plays could have been drawn into comparison with those of Settle. But the meretricious ornaments which he himself had introduced were within the reach of the meanest capacity; and, having been among the first to debauch the taste of the public, it was retributive justice that he should experience their inconstancy. Indeed Dryden seems himself to admit, that the principal difference between his heroic plays and "The Empress of Morocco," was, that the former were good sense, that looked like nonsense, and the latter nonsense, which looked very like sense. A nice distinction, and which argued some regret at having opened the way to such a rival.

The feelings of contempt ought to have suppressed those of anger; but Dryden, who professedly lived to please his own age, had not temper to wait till time should do him justice. Angry he was; and unfortunately he determined to show the world that he did well in being so. With this view, in conjunction with Shadwell and Crowne, two brother-dramatists, equally jealous of Settle's success, he composed a pamphlet, entitled, "Remarks upon the Empress of Morocco." This piece is written in the same tone of boisterous and vulgar raillery with which Clifford and Leigh had assailed Dryden himself; and little resembles our poet's general style of controversy. He seems to have exchanged his satirical scourge for the clumsy flail of Shadwell, when he stooped to use such raillery as the following description of

Settle: "In short, he is an animal of a most deplored understanding, without reading and conversation: his being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought, which he can never fashion either into wit or English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn; his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding."

Settle, nothing dismayed by this vehement attack, manfully retorted the abuse which had been thrown upon him, and answered the insulting clamour of his three antagonists with clamorous insult. It was obvious, that the weaker poet must be the winner by this contest in abuse; and Dryden gained no more by his dispute with Settle, than a well-dressed man who should condescend to wrestle with a chimney-sweeper. The feud between them was carried no farther, until, after the publication of "Absalom and Achitophel," party animosity added spurs to literary rivalry.

We must now return to Rochester; who, observing Settle's rise to this unmerited elevation in the public opinion, became as anxious to lower his presumption as he had formerly been to diminish the reputation of Dryden. With this view, that tyrannical person of honour availed himself of his credit to recommend Crowne to write the masque of "Calisto," which was acted by the lords and ladies of the court of Charles in 1675. Nothing could be more galling towards Dryden, a part of whose duty as poet-laureate was to compose the pieces designed for such occasions. Crowne, though he was a tolerable comic writer, had no turn whatever for tragedy, or indeed for poetry of any kind. But the splendour of the scenery and dresses, the quality of the performers, selected from the first nobility, and the favour of the sovereign, gave "Calisto" a run of nearly thirty nights. Dryden, though mortified, tendered his services in the shape of an epilogue, to be spoken by Lady Henrietta Maria Wentworth. But the influence of his enemy, Rochester, was still predominant, and the epilogue of the laureate was rejected.

The author of "Calisto" also lost his credit with Rochester, as soon as he became generally popular; and shortly after the representation of that piece, its fickle patron seems to have recommended to the royal protection, a rival more formidable to Dryden than either Settle or "starch Johnnie Crowne."* This was no other than Otway, whose "Don Carlos" appeared in 1676, and was hailed as one of the best heroic plays which had been written. The author avows in his preface the obligations he owed to Rochester, who had recommended him to the King and the Duke, to whose favour he owed his good success, and on whose indulgence he reckoned as insuring that of his next attempt. These effusions of gratitude did not, as Mr. Malone observes, withhold Rochester, shortly after, from lampooning Otway, with circumstances of gross insult, in the "Session of the Poets." In the

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* So called according to the communicative old correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1745, from the unalterable stiffness of his long cravat.

same preface, Otway, in very intelligible language, bade defiance to Dryden, whom he charges with having spoken slightly of his play. But although Dryden did not admire the general structure of Otway's poetry, he is said, even at this time, to have borne witness to his power of moving the passions; an acknowledgment which he long afterwards solemnly repeated. Thus Otway, like many others, mistook the character of a pretended friend, and did injustice to that of a liberal rival. Dryden and he indeed never appear to have been personal friends, even when they both wrote in the Tory interest. It was probably about this time that Otway challenged Settle, whose courage appears to have failed him upon the occasion.

Rochester was not content with exciting rivals against Dryden in the public opinion, but assailed him personally in an imitation of Horace, which he quaintly entitled, "An Allusion to the Tenth Satire." It came out anonymously about 1678, but the town was at no loss to guess that Rochester was the patron or author. Much of the satire was bestowed on Dryden, whom Rochester for the first time distinguishes by a ridiculous nickname, which was afterwards echoed by imitating dunces in all their lampoons. The lines are more cutting, because mingled with as much praise as the writer probably thought necessary to gain the credit of a candid critic.* Dryden, on his part, did not view with indifference these repeated direct and indirect attacks on his literary reputation by Rochester. In the preface to "All for Love," published in 1678, he gives a severe rebuke to those men of rank, who, having acquired the credit of wit, either by virtue of their quality, or by common fame, and finding themselves possessed of some smattering of Latin, become ambitious to distinguish themselves by their poetry from the herd of gentlemen. "And is not this," he exclaims, "a wretched affectation, not to be contented with what fortune has done for them, and sit down quietly with their estates, but they must call their wits in question, and

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* "Well, sir, 'tis granted; I said Dryden's rhymes
Were stolen, unequal, nay dull many times;
What foolish patron is there found of his,
So blindly partial to deny me this?
But that his plays, embroider'd up and down
With learning, justly pleased the town,
In the same paper I as freely own.
Yet, having this allow'd, the heavy mass,
That stuffs up his loose volumes, must not pass;
For by that rule I might as well admit
Crowne's tedious scenes for poetry and wit.
'Tis therefore not enough when your false sense
Hits the false judgment of an audience
Of clapping fools assembling, a vast crowd,
Till the throng'd playhouse crack'd with the dull load
Though even that talent merits, in some sort,
That can divert the rabble and the court;
Which blundering Settle never could obtain,
And puzzling Otway labours at in vain."

needlessly expose their nakedness to public view? Not considering that they are not to expect the same approbation from sober men, which they have found from their flatterers after the third bottle. If a little glittering in discourse has passed them on us for witty men, where was the necessity of undeceiving the world? Would a man who has an ill title to an estate, but yet is in possession of it; would he bring it of his own accord to be tried at Westminster? We who write, if we want the talent, yet have the excuse, that we do it for a poor subsistence; but what can be urged in their defence, who, not having the vocation of poverty to scribble, out of mere wantonness take pains to make themselves ridiculous? Horace was certainly in the right, where he said, 'That no man is satisfied with his own condition.' A poet is not pleased, because he is not rich; and the rich are discontented, because the poets will not admit them of their number. Thus the case is hard with writers: if they succeed not, they must starve; and if they do, some malicious satire is prepared to level them, for daring to please without their leave. But while they are so eager to destroy the fame of others, their ambition is manifest in their concernment; some poem of their own is to be produced, and the slaves are to be laid flat with their faces on the ground, that the monarch may appear in the greater majesty." This general censure of the persons of wit and honour about town, is fixed on Rochester in particular, not only by the marked allusion in the last sentence, to the despotic tyranny which he claimed over the authors of his time, but also by a direct attack upon such imitators of Horace, who make doggrel of his Latin, misapply his censures, and often contradict their own. It is remarkable, however, that he ascribes this imitation rather to some zany of the great, than to one of their number; and seems to have thought Rochester rather the patron than the author.

At the expense of anticipating the order of events, and that we may bring Dryden's dispute with Rochester to a conclusion, we must recal to the reader's recollection our author's friendship with Mulgrave. This appears to have been so intimate, that, in 1675, that nobleman entrusted him with the task of revising his "Essay upon Satire:" a poem which contained dishonourable mention of many courtiers of the time, and was particularly severe on Sir Car Scrope and Rochester. The last of these is taxed with cowardice, and a thousand odious and mean vices; upbraided with the grossness and scurrility of his writings, and with the infamous profligacy of his life. The versification of the poem is as flat and inharmonious as the plan is careless and ill-arranged; and though the imputation was to cost Dryden dear, I cannot think that any part of the "Essay on Satire" received additions from his pen. Probably he might contribute a few hints for revision; but the author of "Absalom and Achitophel" could never completely disguise the powers which were shortly to produce that brilliant satire. Dryden's verses must have shone among Mulgrave's as gold beside copper. The whole Essay is a mere stagnant level, no

In pursuance of this infamous resolution, Dryden, upon the night of the 18th December, 1679, was waylaid by hired ruffians, and severely beaten, as he passed through Rose-street, Covent-garden, returning from Will's Coffee-house, to his own house in Gerard-street. A reward of 50*l.* was in vain offered, in the *London Gazette* and other newspapers, for the discovery of the perpetrators of this outrage. The town was, however, at no loss to pitch upon Rochester as the employer of the bravoes, with whom the public suspicion joined the Duchess of Portsmouth, equally concerned in the supposed affront thus avenged. In our time, were a nobleman to have recourse to hired bravoes to avenge his personal quarrel against any one, more especially a person holding the rank of a gentleman, he might lay his account with being hunted out of society. But in the age of Charles, the ancient high and chivalrous sense of honour was esteemed Quixotic, and the Civil War had left traces of ferocity in the manners and sentiments of the people. Rencounters, where the assailants took all advantages of number and weapons, were as frequent, and held as honourable, as regular duels. Some of these approached closely to assassination; as in the famous case of Sir John Coventry, who was waylaid, and had his nose slit by some young men of high rank, for a reflection upon the king's theatrical amours. This occasioned the famous statute against maiming and wounding, called the Coventry Act; an act highly necessary, since so far did our ancestors' ideas of manly forbearance differ from ours, that Killigrew introduces the hero of one of his comedies, a cavalier, and the fine gentleman of the piece, lying in wait for, and slashing the face of a poor courtezan, who had cheated him.*

It will certainly be admitted, that a man, surprised in the dark and beaten by ruffians, loses no honour by such a misfortune. But, if Dryden had received the same discipline from Rochester's own hand without resenting it, his drubbing could not have been more frequently made a matter of reproach to him;—a sign surely of the penury of subjects for satire in his life and character, since an accident, which might have happened to the greatest hero who ever lived, was resorted to as an imputation on his honour. The Rose-alley ambuscade became almost proverbial; and even Mulgrave, the real author of the satire, and upon whose shoulders the blows ought in justice to have descended, mentions the circumstances in his "Art of Poetry," with a cold and self-sufficient complacent sneer:

> "Though praised and punish'd for another's rhymes,
> His own deserve as great applause *sometimes*."

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* I might also mention the sentiment of Count Conigsmarck, who allowed, that the barbarous assassination of Mr. Thynne by his bravoes was a stain on his blood, but such a one as a good action in the wars, or a lodging on a counterscarp, would easily wash out. See his Trial, "State Trials," vol. iv. But Conigsmarck was a foreigner.

one part of it so far rising above the rest as to bespeak the work of a superior hand. The thoughts, even when conceived with some spirit, are clumsily and unhappily brought out; a fault never to be traced in the beautiful language of Dryden, whose powers of expression were at least equal to his force of conception. Besides, as Mr. Malone has observed, he had now brought to the highest excellence his system of versification; and is it possible he could neglect it so far as to write rugged lines where all manner of elliptical barbarisms are resorted to, for squeezing the words into a measure "lame and o'erburdened, and screaming its wretchedness?" The "Essay on Satire" was finally subjected by the noble author to the criticism of Pope, who, less scrupulous than Dryden, appears to have made large improvements; but after having undergone the revision of two of the first names in English poetry, it continues to be a very indifferent performance.

In another point of view, it seems inconsistent with Dryden's situation to suppose he had any active share in the "Essay on Satire." The character of Charles is treated with great severity, as well as those of the Duchesses of Portsmouth and Cleveland, the royal mistresses. This was quite consistent with Mulgrave's disposition, who was at this time discontented with the ministry; but certainly would not have beseemed Dryden, who held an office at court. Sedley also, with whom Dryden always seems to have lived on friendly terms, is harshly treated in the "Essay on Satire." It may be owned, however, that these reasons were not held powerful at the time, since they must, in that case, have saved Dryden from the inconvenient suspicion, which, we will presently see, attached to him. The public were accustomed to see the friendship of wits end in mutual satire; and the good-natured Charles was so generally the subject of the ridicule which he loved, that no one seeems to have thought there was improbability in a libel being composed on him by his own laureate.

The "Essay on Satire," though written, as appears from the title-page of the last edition, in 1675, was not made public until 1679, when several copies were handed about in manuscript. Rochester sends one of these to his friend, Henry Saville, on the 21st of November, 1679, with this observation:—"I have sent you herewith a libel, in which my own share is not the least. The king, having perused it, is no way dissatisfied with his. The author is apparently Mr. Dr[yden], his patron, Lord M[ulgrave], having a panegyric in the midst." From hence it is evident, that Dryden obtained the reputation of being the author; in consequence of which, Rochester meditated the base and cowardly revenge which he afterwards executed; and he thus coolly expressed his intention in another of his letters:—"You write me word, that I'm out of favour with a certain poet, whom I have admired for the disproportion of him and his attributes. He is a rarity which I cannot but be fond of, as one would be of a hog that could fiddle, or a singing owl. If he falls on me at the blunt, which is his very good weapon in wit, I will forgive him if you please; and leave the repartee to black Will with a cudgel."

To which is added in a note, "A libel for which he was both applauded and wounded, though entirely ignorant of the whole matter." This flat and conceited couplet, and note, the noble author judged it proper to omit in the corrected edition of his poem. Otway alone, no longer the friend of Rochester, and perhaps no longer the enemy of Dryden, has spoken of the author of this dastardly outrage with the contempt his cowardly malice deserved:

"Poets in honour of the truth should write,
With the same spirit brave men for it fight;
And though against him causeless hatreds rise,
And daily where he goes, of late, he spies
The scowls of sullen and revengeful eyes;
'Tis what he knows with much contempt to bear,
And serves a cause too good to let him fear:
He fears no poison from incensed Drabb,
No ruffian's five-foot sword, nor rascal's stab;
Nor any other snares of mischief laid,
Not a Rose-alley cudgel ambuscade;
From any private cause where malice reigns,
Or general pique all blockheads have to brains."

It does not appear that Dryden ever thought it worth his while to take revenge on Rochester: and the only allusion to him in his writings may be found in the Essay prefixed to the translation of Juvenal, where he is mentioned as a man of quality, whose ashes our author was unwilling to disturb, and who had paid Dorset, to whom that piece is inscribed, the highest compliment which his self-sufficiency could afford to any one. Perhaps Dryden remembered Rochester among others, when, in the same piece, he takes credit for resisting opportunities and temptation to take revenge, even upon those by whom he had been notoriously and wantonly provoked.

The detail of these quarrels has interrupted our account of Dryden's writings, which we are now to resume.

"Aureng-Zebe" was his first performance after the failure of the "Assignation." It was acted in 1675 with general applause. "Aureng-Zebe" is a heroic or rhyming play, but not cast in a mould quite so romantic as the "Conquest of Granada." There is a grave and moral turn in many of the speeches, which brings it nearer the style of a French tragedy. It is true, the character of Morat borders upon extravagance; but a certain licence has been always given to theatrical tyrants, and we excuse bombast in him more readily than in Almanzor. There is perhaps some reason for this indulgence. The possession of unlimited power, vested in active and mercurial characters, naturally drives them to an extravagant indulgence of passion, bordering upon insanity; and it follows, that their language must outstrip the modesty of nature. Propriety of diction in the drama is relative, and to be referred more to individual character than to general rules: to make a tyrant sober-minded, is to make a madman rational. But this discretion must be used with great caution by the writer, lest he should confound the terrible with the

burlesque. Two great actors, Kynaston and Booth, differed in their style of playing Morat. The former, who was the original performer, and doubtless had his instructions from the author, gave full force to the sentiments of avowed and barbarous vain glory, which mark the character. When he is determined to spare Aureng-Zebe, and Nourmahal pleads,

"'Twill not be safe to let him live an hour,"

Kynaston gave all the stern and haughty insolence of despotism to his answer,

"I'll do't to show my arbitrary power."*

But Booth, with modest caution, avoided marking and pressing upon the audience a sentiment hovering between the comic and terrible, however consonant to the character by whom it was delivered. The principal incident in "Aureng-Zebe" was suggested by King Charles himself. The tragedy is dedicated to Mulgrave, whose patronage had been so effectual, as to introduce Dryden and his poetical schemes to the peculiar notice of the king and duke. The dedication and the prologue of this piece throw considerable light upon these plans, as well as upon the revolution which had gradually taken place in Dryden's dramatic taste.

During the space which occurred between writing the "Conquest of Granada" and "Aureng-Zebe," our author's researches into the nature and causes of harmony of versification had been unremitted, and he had probably already collected the materials of his intended English *Prosodia*. Besides this labour, he had been engaged in a closer and more critical examination of the ancient English poets, than he had before bestowed upon them. These studies seem to have led Dryden to two conclusions; first, that the drama ought to be emancipated from the fetters of rhyme; and secondly, that he ought to employ the system of versification, which he had now perfected, to the more legitimate purpose of epic poetry. Each of these opinions merits consideration.

However hardly Dryden stood forward in defence of the heroic plays, he confessed, even in the heat of argument, that Rhyme, though he was brave and generous, and his dominion pleasing, had still somewhat of the usurper in him. A more minute inquiry seems to have still farther demonstrated the weakness of this usurped dominion; and our author's good taste and practice speedily pointed out deficiencies and difficulties, which Sir Robert Howard, against whom he defended the use of rhyme, could not show, because he never aimed at the excellences which they impeded. The perusal of Shakspeare, on whom Dryden had now turned his attention, led him to feel, that something farther might be attained in tragedy than the expression of

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* Cibber's Apology.

But, although the poet had admitted, that, with powers of versification superior to those possessed by any earlier English author, and a taste corrected by the laborious study both of the language and those who had used it, he found rhyme unfit for the use of the drama, he at the same time discovered a province where it might be employed in all its splendour. We have the mortification to learn, from the Dedication of "Aureng-Zebe," that Dryden only wanted encouragement to enter upon the composition of an epic poem, and to abandon the thriftless task of writing for the promiscuous audience of the theatre,—a task which, rivalled as he had lately been by Crówne and Settle, he most justly compares to the labour of Sisyphus. His plot, he elsewhere explains, was to be founded either upon the story of Arthur, or of Edward the Black Prince; and he mentions it to Mulgrave in the following remarkable passage, which argues great dissatisfaction with dramatic labour, arising perhaps from a combined feeling of the bad taste of rhyming plays, the degrading dispute with Settle, and the failure of the "Assignation," his last theatrical attempt: —"If I must be condemned to rhyme, I should find some ease in my change of punishment. I desire to be no longer the Sisyphus of the stage; to roll up a stone with endless labour, which, to follow the proverb, 'gathers no moss,' and which is perpetually falling down again. I never thought myself very fit for an employment, where many of my predecessors have excelled me in all kinds; and some of my contemporaries, even in my own partial judgment, have outdone me in comedy. Some little hopes I have yet remaining (and those too, considering my abilities, may be vain), that I may make the world some part of amends for many ill plays, by an heroic poem. Your lordship has been long acquainted with my design; the subject of which you know is great, the story English, and neither too far distant from the present age, nor too near approaching it. Such it is in my opinion, that I could not have wished a nobler occasion to do honour by it to my king, my country, and my friends; most of our ancient nobility being concerned in the action. And your lordship has one particular reason to promote this undertaking, because you were the first who gave me the opportunity of discoursing it to his majesty, and his royal highness; they were then pleased both to commend the design, and to encourage it by their commands; but the unsettledness of my condition has hitherto put a stop to my thoughts concerning it. As I am no successor to Homer in his wit, so neither do I desire to be in his poverty. I can make no rhapsodies, nor go a begging at the Grecian doors, while I sing the praises of their ancestors. The times of Virgil please me better, because he had an Augustus for his patron; and, to draw the allegory nearer you, I am sure I shall not want a Mæcenas with him. It is for your lordship to stir up that remembrance in his majesty, which his many avocations of business have caused him, I fear, to lay aside; and, as himself and his royal brother are the heroes of the poem, to represent to them the images of their warlike predecessors; as Achilles is said to be roused to glory with

exaggerated sentiment in smooth verse, and that the scene ought to represent, not a fanciful set of agents exerting their superhuman faculties in a fairy-land of the poet's own creation, but human characters, acting from the direct and energetic influence of human passions, with whose emotions the audience might sympathize, because akin to the feelings of their own hearts. When Dryden had once discovered, that fear and pity were more likely to be excited by other causes than the logic of metaphysical love, or the dictates of fantastic honour, he must have found, that rhyme sounded as unnatural in the dialogue of characters drawn upon the usual scale of humanity, as the plate and mail of chivalry would have appeared on the persons of the actors. The following lines of the Prologue to "Aureng-Zebe," although prefixed to a rhyming play, the last which he ever wrote, expresses Dryden's change of sentiment on these points:

"Our author, by experience, finds it true,
'Tis much more hard to please himself than you:
And, out of no feign'd modesty, this day
Damns his laborious trifle of a play:
Not that it's worse than what before he writ,
But he has now another taste of wit;
And, to confess a truth, though out of time,
Grows weary of his long-loved mistress, Rhyme.
Passion's too fierce to be in fetters bound,
And nature flies him like enchanted ground.
What verse can do, he has perform'd in this,
Which he presumes the most correct of his;
But spite of all his pride, a secret shame
Invades his breast at Shakspeare's sacred name:
Awed when he hears his godlike Romans rage,
He, in a just despair, would quit the stage;
And to an age less polish'd, more unskill'd,
Does, with disdain, the foremost honours yield."

It is remarkable, as a trait of character, that, though our author admitted his change of opinion on this long disputed point, he would not consent that it should be imputed to any arguments which his opponents had the wit to bring against him. On this subject he enters a protest in the Preface to his revised edition of the "Essay of Dramatic Poesy" in 1684:—"I confess, I find many things in this discourse which I do not now approve; my judgment being not a little altered since the writing of it; but whether for the better or the worse, I know not: neither indeed is it much material, in an essay, where all I have said is problematical. For the way of writing plays in verse, which I have seemed to favour, I have, since that time, laid the practice of it aside, till I have more leisure, because I find it troublesome and slow: but I am no way altered from my opinion of it, at least with any reasons which have opposed it; for your lordship may easily observe, that none are very violent against it, but those who either have not attempted it, or who have succeeded ill in their attempt." Thus cautious was Dryden in not admitting a victory, even in a cause which he had surrendered.

one sight of the combat before the ships. For my own part, I am satisfied to have offered the design; and it may be to the advantage of my reputation to have it refused me."

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Malone remark, that Dryden observes a mystery concerning the subject of his intended epic, to prevent the risk of being anticipated, as he finally was by Sir Richard Blackmore, on the topic of Arthur. This, as well as other passages in Dryden's life, allows us the pleasing indulgence of praising the decency of our own time. Were an author of distinguished merit to announce his having made choice of a subject for a large poem, the writer would have more than common confidence who should venture to forestall his labours. But, in the seventeenth century, such an intimation would, it seems, have been an instant signal for the herd of scribblers to souse upon it, like the harpies on the feast of the Trojans, and leave its mangled relics too polluted for the use of genius:—

"*Turba sonans prædam pedibus circumvolat uncis;*
Polluit ore dapes.

Semesan prædam et vestigia fœda relinquunt."

"Aureng-Zebe" was followed, in 1678, by "All for Love," the only play Dryden ever wrote for himself; the rest, he says, were given to the people. The habitual study of Shakspeare, which seems lately to have occasioned, at least greatly aided, the revolution in his taste, induced him, among a crowd of emulous shooters, to try his strength in this bow of Ulysses. I have, in some preliminary remarks to the play,* endeavoured to point out the difference between the manner of these great artists in treating the misfortunes of Antony and Cleopatra. If these are just, we must allow Dryden the praise of greater regularity of plot, and a happier combination of scene; but in sketching the character of Antony, he loses the majestic and heroic tone which Shakspeare has assigned him. There is too much of the lovelorn knight-errant, and too little of the Roman warrior, in Dryden's hero. The passion of Antony, however overpowering and destructive in its effects, ought not to have resembled the love of a sighing swain of Arcadia. This error in the original conception of the character must doubtless be ascribed to Dryden's habit of romantic composition. Montezuma and Almanzor were, like the prophet's image, formed of a mixture of iron and clay; of stern and rigid demeanour to all the universe, but unbounded devotion to the ladies of their affections. In Antony, the first class of attributes are discarded; he has none of that tumid and outrageous dignity which characterized the heroes of the rhyming plays, and in its stead is gifted with even more than an usual share of devoted attachment to his mistress. In the preface, Dryden piques himself upon venturing to introduce the quarrelling

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This memoir preceded Scott's edition of Dryden's works.—[EDIT.]

scene between Octavia and Cleopatra, which a French writer would have rejected, as contrary to the decorum of the theatre. But our author's idea of female character was at all times low; and the coarse, indecent violence, which he has thrown into the expressions of a queen and a Roman matron, is misplaced and disgusting, and contradicts the general and well-founded observation on the address and self-command, with which even women of ordinary dispositions can veil mutual dislike and hatred, and the extreme keenness with which they can arm their satire, while preserving all the external forms of civil demeanour. But Dryden more than redeemed this error in the scene between Antony and Ventidius, which he himself preferred to any that he ever wrote, and perhaps with justice, if we except that between Dorax and Sebastian: both are avowedly written in imitation of the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius. "All for Love" was received by the public with universal applause. Its success, with that of "Aureng-Zebe," gave fresh lustre to the author's reputation, which had been somewhat tarnished by the failure of the "Assignation," and the rise of so many rival dramatists. We learn from the Players' petition to the Lord Chamberlain, that "All for Love" was of service to the author's fortune as well as to his fame, as he was permitted the benefit of a third night, in addition to his profits as a sharer with the company. The play was dedicated to the Earl of Danby, then a minister in high power, but who, in the course of a few months, was disgraced and imprisoned at the suit of the Commons. As Danby was a great advocate for prerogative, Dryden fails not to approach him with an encomium on monarchical government, as regulated and circumscribed by law. In reprobating the schemes of those innovators, who, surfeiting on happiness, endeavoured to persuade their fellow subjects to risk a change, he has a pointed allusion to the Earl of Shaftesbury, who, having left the royal councils in disgrace, was now at the head of the popular faction.

In 1678 Dryden's next play, a comedy, entitled "Limberham," was acted at Dorset-garden theatre, but was endured for three nights only. It was designed, the author informs us, as a satire on "the crying sin of keeping;" and the crime for which it suffered was, that "it expressed too much of the vice which it decried." Grossly indelicate as this play still is, it would seem from the Dedication to Lord Vaughan, that much which offended on the stage was altered, or omitted, in the press; yet more than enough remains to justify the sentence pronounced against it by the public. Mr. Malone seems to suppose Shaftesbury's party had some share in its fate, supposing that the character of Limberham had reference to their leader. Yet surely, although Shaftesbury was ridiculous for aiming at gallantry, from which his age and personal infirmity should have deterred him, Dryden would never have drawn the witty, artful politician, as a silly, henpecked cully. Besides, Dryden was about this time supposed even himself to have some leaning to the popular cause; a supposition irreconcilable with his caricaturing the foibles of Shaftesbury.

The tragedy of "Œdipus" was written by Dryden in conjunction with Lee: the entire first and third acts were the work of our author, who also arranged the general plan, and corrected the whole piece. Having offered some observations* elsewhere upon this play, and the mode in which its celebrated theme has been treated by the dramatists of different nations, I need not here resume the subject. The time of the first representation is fixed to the beginning of the playing season, in winter 1678-9, although it was not printed until 1679.† Both "Limberham" and "Œdipus" were acted at the Duke's theatre; so that it would seem that our author was relieved from his contract with the King's house, probably because the shares were so much diminished in value, that his appointment was now no adequate compensation for his labour. The managers of the King's company complained to the lord chamberlain, and endeavoured, as we have seen, by pleading upon the contract, to assert their right to the play of "Œdipus." But their claim to reclaim the poet and the play appears to have been set aside, and Dryden continued to give his performances to the Duke's theatre until the union of the two companies.

Dryden was now to do a new homage to Shakspeare, by refitting for the stage the play of "Troilus and Cressida," which the author left in a state of strange imperfection, resembling more a chronicle, or legend, than a dramatic piece. Yet it may be disputed whether Dryden has greatly improved it even in the particulars which he censures in his original. His plot, though more artificial, is at the same time more trite than that of Shakspeare. The device by which Troilus is led to doubt the constancy of Cressida is much less natural than that she should have been actually inconstant; her vindication by suicide is a clumsy, as well as a hackneyed expedient; and there is too much drum and trumpet in the grand finale, where "Troilus and Diomede fight, and both parties engage at the same time. The Trojans make the Greeks retire, and Troilus makes Diomede give ground, and hurts him. Trumpets sound. Achilles enters with his Myrmidons, on the backs of the Trojans, who fight in a ring, encompassed round. Troilus, singling Diomede, gets him down, and kills him; and Achilles kills Troilus upon him. All the Trojans die upon the place, Troilus last." Such a *bellum internecinum* can never be waged to advantage upon the stage. One extravagant passage in this play serves strongly to evince Dryden's rooted dislike to the clergy. Troilus exclaims,—

" That I should trust the daughter of a priest!
Priesthood, that makes a merchandize of heaven!
Priesthood, that sells even to their prayers and blessings,
And forces us to pay for our own cozenage!
Thersites. Nay, cheats heaven too with entrails and with offals;
Gives it the garbage of a sacrifice,
And keeps the best for private luxury.

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* See Scott's edition of Dryden's plays.
† By allusion to the Act for burying in woollen.

Troilus. Thou hast deserved thy life for cursing priests.
Let me embrace thee; thou art beautiful:
That back, that nose, those eyes are beautiful;
Live; thou art honest, for thou hat'st a priest."

Dryden prefixed to "Troilus and Cressida" his excellent remarks on the Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy, giving up, with dignified indifference the faults even of his own pieces, when they contradict the rules his better judgment had adopted. How much his taste had altered since his "Essay of Dramatic Poesy," or at least since his "Remarks on Heroic Plays," will appear from the following abridgment of his new maxims. The Plot, according to these remarks, ought to be simply and naturally detailed, from its commencement to its conclusion,—a rule which excluded the crowded incidents of the Spanish drama; and the personages ought to be dignified and virtuous, that their misfortunes might at once excite pity and terror. The plots of Shakspeare and Fletcher are meted by this rule, and pronounced inferior in mechanical regularity to those of Ben Jonson. The Characters of the agents, or persons, are next to be considered; and it is required that their Manners shall be at once marked, dramatic, consistent, and natural. And here the super-eminent powers of Shakspeare, in displaying the manners, bent, and inclination of his characters, is pointed out to the reader's admiration. The copiousness of his invention, and his judgment in sustaining the ideas which he started, are illustrated by referring to Caliban, a creature of the fancy, begot by an incubus upon a witch, and furnished with a person, language, and character befitting his pedigree on both sides. The Passions are then considered as included in the Manners; and Dryden, at once and peremptorily, condemns both the extravagance of language which substitutes noise for feeling, and those points and turns of wit which misbecome one actuated by real and deep emotion. He candidly gives an example of the last error from his own Montezuma, who, pursued by his enemies, and excluded from the fort, describes his situation in a long simile, taken besides from the sea, which he had only heard of for the first time in the first Act. As a description of natural passion, the famous procession of King Richard in the train of the fortunate usurper is quoted, in justice to the divine author. From these just and liberal rules of criticism, it is easy to discover that Dryden had already adopted a better taste, and was disgusted with comedies, where the entertainment arose from bustling incident, and tragedies, where sounding verse was substituted for the delineation of manners and expression of feeling. These opinions he pointedly delivers in the Prologue to "Troilus and Cressida," which was spoken by Betterton representing the ghost of Shakspeare:

"See, my loved Britons, see your Shakspeare rise,
An awful ghost confess'd to human eyes!
Unnamed, methinks, distinguish'd I had been,
From other shades, by this eternal green,

About whose wreaths the vulgar poets strive,
And, with a touch, their wither'd bays revive.
Untaught, unpractised, in a barbarous age,
I found not, but created first the stage.
And, if I drain'd no Greek or Latin store,
'Twas, that my own abundance gave me more.
On foreign trade I needed not rely,
Like fruitful Britain, rich without supply.
In this, my rough-drawn play, you shall behold
Some master-strokes, so manly and so bold,
That he who meant to alter, found 'em such,
He shook, and thought it sacrilege to touch.
Now, where are the successors to my name?
What bring they to fill out a poet's fame?
Weak, short-lived issues of a feeble age,
Scarce living to be christen'd on the stage!
For humour *farce*, for love they *rhyme* dispense,
That tolls the knell for their departed sense."

It is impossible to read these lines, remembering Dryden's earlier opinions, without acknowledging the truth of the ancient proverb, *Magna est veritas, et prevalebit.*

The "Spanish Friar," our author's most successful comedy, succeeded "Troilus and Cressida." We may briefly notice, that in the tragic scenes our author has attained that better strain of dramatic poetry which he afterwards evinced in "Sebastian." In the comic part, the well-known character of Father Dominic, though the conception only embodies the abstract idea which the ignorant and prejudiced fanatics of the day formed to themselves of a Romish priest, is brought out and illustrated with peculiar spirit. The gluttony, avarice, debauchery, and meanness of Dominic, are qualified with the talent and wit necessary to save him from being utterly detestable; and, from the beginning to the end of the piece, these qualities are so happily tinged with insolence, hypocrisy, and irritability, that they cannot be mistaken for the avarice, debauchery, gluttony, and meanness of any other profession than that of a bad churchman. In the tragic plot we principally admire the general management of the opening, and chiefly censure the cold-blooded barbarity and perfidy of the young queen, in instigating the murder of the deposed sovereign, and then attempting to turn the guilt on her accomplice. I fear Dryden here forgot his own general rule, that the tragic hero and heroine should have so much virtue as to entitle their distress to the tribute of compassion. Altogether, however, the "Spanish Friar," in both its parts, is an interesting, and almost a fascinating play; although the tendency, even of the tragic scenes, is not laudable, and the comedy, though more decent in language, is not less immoral in tendency than was usual in that loose age.

Dryden attached considerable importance to the art with which the comic and tragic scenes of the "Spanish Friar" are combined; and in doing so, he has received the sanction of Dr. Johnson. Indeed, as the ardour of his mind ever led him to prize that task most highly on

which he had most lately employed his energy, he has affirmed in the dedication to the "Spanish Friar," that there was an absolute necessity for combining two actions in tragedy, for the sake of variety. "The truth is," he adds, "the audience are grown weary of continued melancholy scenes; and I dare venture to prophecy, that few tragedies, except those in verse, shall succeed in this age, if they are not lightened with a course of mirth; for the feast is too dull and solemn without the fiddles." The necessity of the relief alluded to may be admitted, without allowing that we must substitute either the misplaced charms of versification, or a secondary comic plot, to relieve the solemn weight and monotony of tragedy. It is no doubt true, that a highly-buskined tragedy, in which all the personages maintain the funeral pomp usually required from the victims of Melpomene, is apt to be intolerably tiresome, after all the pains which a skilful and elegant poet can bestow upon finishing it. But it is chiefly tiresome, because it is unnatural; and, in respect of propriety, ought no more to be relieved by the introduction of a set of comic scenes, independent of those of a mournful complexion, than the *sombre* air of a funeral should be enlivened by a concert of fiddles. There appear to be two legitimate modes of interweaving tragedy with something like comedy. The first and most easy, which has often been resorted to, is to make the lower or less marked characters of the drama, like the porter in "Macbeth" or the fool in "King Lear," speak the language appropriate to their station, even in the midst of the distresses of the piece; nay, they may be permitted to have some slight under-intrigue of their own. This, however, requires the exertion of much taste and discrimination; for if we are once seriously and deeply interested in the distress of the play, the intervention of anything like buffoonery may unloose the hold which the author has gained on the feelings of the audience. If such subordinate comic characters are of a rank to intermix in the tragic dialogue, their mirth ought to be chastened, till their language bears a relation to that of the higher persons. For example nothing can be more absurd than in "Don Sebastian," and some of Southerne's tragedies, to hear the comic character answer in prose, and with a would-be witticism, to the solemn, unrelaxed blank verse of his tragic companion.* Mercutio is, I think, one of the best instances of such a comic person as may be reasonably and with propriety admitted into tragedy: from which, however, I do not exclude those lower characters, whose conversation appears absurd if much elevated above their rank. There is, however, another mode, yet more difficult to be used with address, but much more fortunate in effect when it has been successfully employed. This is, when the principal personages themselves do not always remain in the buckram of tragedy, but reserve, as in common life, lofty expressions for great occasions, and at other times evince themselves capable of feeling the lighter, as

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* This is ridiculed in "Chrononhotonthologos."

well as the more violent or more deep, affections of the mind. The shades of comic humour in Hamlet, in Hotspur, and in Falconbridge, are so far from injuring, that they greatly aid the effect of the tragic scenes, in which these same persons take a deep and tragical share. We grieve with them, when grieved, still more, because we have rejoiced with them when they rejoiced; and, on the whole, we acknowledge a deeper *frater feeling*, as Burns has termed it, in men who are actuated by the usual changes of human temperament, than in those who, contrary to the nature of humanity, are eternally actuated by an unvaried strain of tragic feeling. But whether the poet diversifies his melancholy scenes by the passing gaiety of subordinate characters; or whether he qualifies the tragic state of his heroes by occasionally assigning lighter tasks to them; or whether he chooses to employ both modes of relieving the weight of misery through five long acts; it is obviously unnecessary that he should distract the attention of his audience, and destroy the regularity of his play, by introducing a comic plot with personages and interest altogether distinct, and intrigue but slightly connected with that of the tragedy. Dryden himself afterwards acknowledged, that, though he was fond of the "Spanish Friar," he could not defend it from the imputation of Gothic and unnatural irregularity; "for mirth and gravity destroy each other, and are no more to be allowed for decent, than a gay widow laughing in a mourning habit."

The "Spanish Friar" was brought out in 1681-2, when the nation was in a ferment against the Catholics, on account of the supposed plot. It is dedicated to John, Lord Haughton, as a Protestant play inscribed to a Protestant patron. It was also the last dramatic work, excepting the political play of the "Duke of Guise," and the masque of "Albion and Albanius," brought out by our author before the Revolution. And in political tendency, the "Spanish Friar" has so different colouring from these last pieces, that it is worth while to pause to examine the private relations of the author when he composed it.

Previous to 1678, Lord Mulgrave, our author's constant and probably effectual patron, had given him an opportunity of discoursing over his plan of an epic poem to the King and Duke of York; and in the preface to "Aureng-Zebe" in that year, the poet intimates an indirect complaint, that the royal brothers had neglected his plan. About two years afterwards, Mulgrave seems himself to have fallen into disgrace, and was considered as in opposition to the court.* Dryden was deprived of his intercession, and appears in some degree to have shared his disgrace. The "Essay on Satire" became public in November, 1679, and being generally imputed to Dryden, it is said distinctly by one libeller, that his pension was for a time interrupted.

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* He is said to have cast the eyes of ambitious affection on the Lady Anne (afterwards queen), daughter of the Duke of York; at which presumption Charles

This does not seem likely; it is more probable, that Dryden shared the general fate of the household of Charles II., whose appointments were but irregularly paid; but perhaps his supposed delinquency made it more difficult for him than others to obtain redress. At this period broke out the pretended discovery of the Popish Plot, in which Dryden, even in "Absalom and Achitophel," evinces a partial belief. Not encouraged, if not actually discountenanced, at court: sharing in some degree the discontent of his patron Mulgrave; above all, obliged by his situation to please the age in which he lived, Dryden did not probably hold the reverence of the Duke of York so sacred as to prevent his making the ridicule of the Catholic religion the means of recommending his play to the passions of the audience. Neither was his situation at court in any danger from his closing on this occasion with the popular tide. Charles, during the heat of the Popish Plot, was so far from being in a situation to incur odium by dismissing a laureate for having written a Protestant play, that he was obliged for a time to throw the reins of government into the hands of those very persons, to whom the Papists were most obnoxious. The inference drawn from Dryden's performance was, that he had deserted the court; and the Duke of York was so much displeased with the tenor of the play, that it was the only one of which, on acceding to the crown, he prohibited the representation. The "Spanish Friar" was often objected to the author by his opponents, after he had embraced the religion there satirized. Nor was the idea of his apostacy from the court an invention of his enemies after his conversion, for it prevailed at the commencement of the party-disputes; and the name of Dryden is, by a partizan of royalty, ranked with that of his bitter foe Shadwell, as followers of Shaftesbury in 1680. But whatever cause of coolness or disgust our author had received from Charles or his brother, was removed, as usual, as soon as his services became necessary; and thus the supposed author of a libel on the king became the ablest defender of the cause of monarchy, and the author of the "Spanish Friar" the advocate and convert of the Catholic religion.

In his private circumstances Dryden must have been even worse situated than at the close of the last chapter. His contract with the king's company was now ended, and long before seems to have produced him little profit. If Southerne's biographer can be trusted, Dryden never made by a single play more than one hundred pounds; so that, with all his fertility, he could not, at his utmost exertion,

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was so much offended, that when Mulgrave went to relieve Tangier in 1680, he is said to have been appointed to a leaky and frail vessel, in hopes that he might perish; an injury which he resented so highly, as not to permit the king's health to be drunk at his table till the voyage was over. On his return from Tangier he was refused the regiment of the Earl of Plymouth; and, considering his services as neglected, for a time joined those who were discontented with the government. He was probably reclaimed by receiving the government of Hull and lieutenancy of Yorkshire.

make more than two hundred a year by his theatrical labours.* At the same time, they so totally engrossed his leisure, that he produced no other work of consequence after the "Annus Mirabilis." If, therefore, the payment of his pension was withheld, whether from the resentment of the court, or the poverty of the exchequer, he might well complain of the "unsettled state," which doomed him to continue these irksome and ill-paid labours.

CHAPTER V.

Dryden engages in Politics—Absalom and Achitophel, part first—The Medal—Mac-Flecknoe—Absalom and Achitophel, part second—The Duke of Guise.

THE controversies in which Dryden had hitherto been engaged were of a private complexion, arising out of literary disputes and rivalry. But the country was now deeply agitated by political faction; and so powerful an auxiliary was not permitted by his party to remain in a state of inactivity. The religion of the Duke of York rendered him obnoxious to a large proportion of the people, still agitated by the terrors of the Popish Plot. The Duke of Monmouth, handsome, young, brave, and courteous, had all the external requisites for a popular idol; and what he wanted in mental qualities was amply supplied by the Machiavel subtlety of Shaftesbury. The life of Charles was the only isthmus between these contending tides, "which, mounting, viewed each other from afar, and strove in vain to meet." It was already obvious, that the King's death was to be the signal of civil war. His situation was doubly embarrassing, because, in all probability, Monmouth, whose claims were both unjust in themselves and highly derogatory to the authority of the crown, was personally amiable, and more beloved by Charles than was his inflexible and bigoted brother. But to consent to the bill for excluding the lawful heir from the crown, would have been at the same time putting himself in a state of pupilage for the rest of his reign, and evincing to his subjects that they had nothing to expect from attachment to his person, or defence of his interest. This was a sacrifice not to be thought of so long as the dreadful recollection of the wars in the preceding reign determined a large party to support the monarch, while he con-

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* "Dryden being very desirous of knowing how much Southerne had made by the profits of one of his plays, the other, conscious of the little success Dryden had met with in theatrical compositions, declined the question, and answered, he was really ashamed to acquaint him. Dryden continuing to be solicitous to be informed, Southerne owned he had cleared by his last play 70*l.*; which appeared astonishing to Dryden, who was perhaps ashamed to confess, that he had never been able to acquire, by any of his most successful pieces, more than 100*l.*!"—*Life of Southerne* prefixed to his Plays.

tinued willing to accept of their assistance. Charles accordingly adopted a determined course; and to the rage rather than confusion of his partisans, Monmouth was banished to Holland, from whence he boldly returned without the King's licence, and openly assumed the character of the leader of a party. Estranged from court, he made various progresses through the country, and employed every art which the genius of Shaftesbury could suggest, to stimulate the courage, and to increase the number of his partisans. The press, that awful power, so often and so rashly misused, was not left idle. Numbers of the booksellers were distinguished as Protestant or fanatical publishers; and their shops teemed with the furious declamations of Ferguson, the inflammatory sermons of Hickeringill, the political disquisitions of Hunt, and the party plays and libellous poems of Settle and Shadwell. An host of rhymers, inferior even to those last-named, attacked the King, the Duke of York, and the ministry, in songs and libels which, however paltry, were read, sung, rehearsed, and applauded. It was time that some champion should appear in behalf of the crown, before the public should have been irrecoverably alienated by the incessant and slanderous clamour of its opponents. Dryden's place, talents, and mode of thinking, qualified him for this task. He was the poet-laureate and household servant of the King thus tumultuously assailed. His vein of satire was keen, terse, and powerful, beyond any that has since been displayed. From the time of the Restoration, he had been a favourer of monarchy—perhaps more so because the opinion divided him from his own family. If he had been for a time neglected, the smiles of a sovereign soon made his coldness forgotten; and if his narrow fortune was not increased, or even rendered stable, he had promises of provision which inclined him to look to the future with hope, and endure the present with patience. If he had shared in the discontent which for a time severed Mulgrave from the royal party, that cause ceased to operate when his patron was reconciled to the court, and received a share of the spoils of the disgraced Monmouth.* If there wanted further impulse to induce Dryden, conscious of his strength, to mingle in an affray where it might be displayed to advantage, he had the stimulus of personal attachment and personal enmity, to sharpen his political animosity. Ormond, Halifax, and Hyde, Earl of Rochester, among the nobles, were his patrons; Lee and Southerne, among the poets, were his friends. These were partisans of royalty. The Duke of York, whom the "Spanish Friar" probably had offended, was conciliated by a prologue on his visiting the theatre at his return from Scotland, and it is said by the omission of certain peculiarly offensive passages, as soon as the play was reprinted. The opposite ranks contained Buckingham, author of the "Rehearsal;" Shadwell, with whom our poet now urged open war; and Settle, the insolence of whose rivalry was neither forgotten, nor duly avenged. The respect due

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* Mulgrave was created lieutenant of Yorkshire and governor of Hull, when Monmouth was deprived of these and other honours.

to Monmouth was probably the only consideration to be overcome: but his character was to be handled with peculiar lenity; and his duchess, who, rather than himself, had patronized Dryden, was so dissatisfied with his politics, as well as the other irregularities of her husband, that there was no danger of her taking a gentle correction of his ambition as any affront to herself. Thus stimulated by every motive, and withheld by none, Dryden composed, and on the 17th November, 1681, published the satire of "Absalom and Achitophel."

The plan of the satire was not new to the public. A Catholic poet nad, in 1679, paraphrased the scriptural story of Naboth's vineyard, and applied it to the condemnation of Lord Stafford, on account of the Popish Plot. This poem is written in the style of a scriptural allusion; the names and situations of personages in the holy text being applied to those contemporaries to whom the author assigned a place in his piece. Neither was the obvious application of the story of Absalom and Achitophel to the persons of Monmouth and Shaftesbury first made by our poet. A prose paraphrase, published in 1680, had already been composed upon this allusion. But the vigour of the satire, the happy adaptation, not only of the incidents, but of the very names to the individuals characterized, gave Dryden's poem the full effect of novelty. It appeared a very short time after Shaftesbury had been committed to the Tower, and only a few days before the grand jury were to take under consideration the bill preferred against him for high treason. Its sale was rapid beyond example; and even those who were most severely characterized, were compelled to acknowledge the beauty, if not the justice, of the satire. The character of Monmouth, an easy and gentle temper, inflamed beyond its usual pitch by ambition, and seduced by the arts of a wily and interested associate, is touched with exquisite delicacy. The poet is as careful of the offending Absalom's fame as the father in Scripture of the life of his rebel son. The fairer side of his character is industriously presented, and a veil drawn over all that was worthy of blame. But Shaftesbury pays the lenity with which Monmouth is dismissed. The traits of praise, and the tribute paid to that statesman's talents, are so qualified and artfully blended with censure, that they seem to render his faults even more conspicuous, and more hateful. In this skilful mixture of applause and blame lies the nicest art of satire. There must be an appearance of candour on the part of the poet, and just so much merit allowed, even to the object of his censure, as to make his picture natural. It is a child alone who fears the aggravated terrors of a Saracen's head; the painter who would move the awe of an enlightened spectator, must delineate his tyrant with human features. It seems likely that Dryden considered the portrait of Shaftesbury, in the first edition of "Absalom and Achitophel," as somewhat deficient in this respect; at least the second edition contains twelve additional lines, the principal tendency of which is to praise the ability and integrity with which Shaftesbury had discharged the office of Lord High Chancellor. It has been reported that this mitigation was in-

tended to repay a singular exertion of generosity on Shaftesbury's part, who, while smarting under the lash of Dryden's satire, and in the short interval between the first and second edition of the poem, had the liberality to procure admission for the poet's son upon the foundation of the Charterhouse, of which he was then governor. But Mr. Malone has fully confuted this tale, and shown, from the records of the seminary, that Dryden's son Erasmus was admitted upon the recommendation of the King himself. The insertion, therefore, of the lines in commemoration of Shaftesbury's judicial character, was a voluntary effusion on the part of Dryden, and a tribute which he seems to have judged it proper to pay to the merit even of an enemy. Others of the party of Monmouth, or rather of the opposition party (for it consisted, as is commonly the case, of a variety of factions, agreeing in the single principle of opposition to the government), were stigmatized with severity only inferior to that applied to Achitophel. Among these we distinguish the famous Duke of Buckingham, with whom, under the character of Zimri, our author balanced accounts for his share in the "Rehearsal;" Bethel, the Whig sheriff, whose scandalous avarice was only equalled by his factious turbulence; and Titus Oates, the pretended discoverer of the Popish Plot. The account of the Tory chiefs, who retained, in the language of the poem, their friendship for David at the expense of the popular hatred, included, of course, most of Dryden's personal protectors. The aged Duke of Ormond is panegyrized with a beautiful apostrophe to the memory of his son, the gallant Earl of Ossory. The bishops of London and Rochester; Mulgrave, our author's constant patron, now reconciled with Charles and his government; the plausible and trimming Halifax; and Hyde, Earl of Rochester, second son to the great Clarendon, appear in this list. The poet having thus arrayed and mustered the forces on each side, some account of the combat is naturally expected; and Johnson complains, that after all the interest excited, the story is but lamely wound up by a speech from the throne, which produces the instantaneous and even marvellous effect of reconciling all parties, and subduing the whole phalanx of opposition. Even thus, says the critic, the walls, towers, and battlements of an enchanted castle disappear, when the destined knight winds his horn before it. Spence records in his "Anecdotes" that Charles himself imposed on Dryden the task of paraphrasing the speech to his Oxford parliament, at least the most striking passages, as a conclusion to his poem of "Absalom and Achitophel."

But let us consider whether the nature ot the poem admitted of a different management in the close. Incident was not to be attempted; for the poet had described living characters and existing factions, the issue of whose contention was yet in the womb of fate, and could not safely be anticipated in the satire. Besides, the dissolution of the Oxford parliament with that memorable speech was a remarkable era in the contention of the factions, after which the Whigs gradually declined, both in spirit, in power, and in popularity. Their boldest

leaders were for a time appalled; and when they resumed their measures, they gradually approached rather revolution than reform, and thus alienated the more temperate of their own party, till at length their schemes terminated in the Rye-house Conspiracy. The speech having such an effect, was therefore not improperly adopted as a termination to the poem of "Absalom and Achitophel."

The success of this wonderful satire was so great that the court had again recourse to the assistance of its author. Shaftesbury was now liberated from the Tower; for the grand jury, partly influenced by deficiency of proof, and partly by the principles of the Whig party, out of which the sheriffs had carefully selected them, refused to find the bill of high treason against him. This was a subject of unbounded triumph to his adherents, who celebrated his acquittal by the most public marks of rejoicing. Amongst others, a medal was struck, bearing the head and name of Shaftesbury, and on the reverse, a sun, obscured with a cloud, rising over the Tower and city of London, with the date of the refusal of the bill (24th November, 1681), and the motto LÆTAMUR. These medals, which his partisans wore ostentatiously at their bosoms, excited the general indignation of the Tories; and the King himself is said to have suggested it as a theme for the satirical muse of Dryden, and to have rewarded his performance with an hundred broad pieces. To a poet of less fertility, the royal command, to write again upon a character, which, in a former satire, he had drawn with so much precision and felicity, might have been as embarrassing at least as honourable. But Dryden was inexhaustible; and easily discovered, that though he had given the outline of Shaftesbury in "Absalom and Achitophel," the finished colouring might merit another canvas. About the 16th of March, 1681, he published, anonymously, "The Medal, a Satire against Sedition," with the apt motto,

> "*Per Graium populos, mediæque per Elidis urbem*
> *Ibat ovans; Divumque sibi poscebat honores.*"

In this satire, Shaftesbury's history; his frequent political apostacies; his licentious course of life, so contrary to the stern rigour of the fanatics with whom he had associated; his arts in instigating the fury of the anti-monarchists; in fine, all the political and moral bearings of his character,—are sounded and exposed to contempt and reprobation, the beauty of the poetry adding grace to the severity of the satire. What impression these vigorous and well-aimed darts made upon Shaftesbury, who was so capable of estimating their sharpness and force, we have no means to ascertain; but long afterwards, his grandson, the author of the "Characteristics," speaks of Dryden and his works with a bitter affectation of contempt, offensive to every reader of judgment, and obviously formed on prejudice against the man, rather than dislike to the poetry. It is said that he felt more resentment on account of the character of imbecility adjudged to his father in "Absalom and Achitophel," than for all the pungent satire,

there and in the "Medal," bestowed upon his grandfather; an additional proof, how much more easy it is to bear those reflections which render ourselves or our friends hateful, than those by which they are only made ridiculous and contemptible.

The Whig poets, for many assumed that title, did not behold these attacks upon their leader and party with patience or forbearance; but they rushed to the combat with more zeal, or rather fury, than talent or policy. We need here only slightly notice those which Dryden thought worthy of his own animadversion. Most of them adopted the clumsy and obvious expedient of writing their answers in the style of the successful satire which had provoked them. Thus, in reply to "Absalom and Achitophel," Pordage and Settle imitated the plan of bestowing scriptural names on their poem and characters; the former entitling his piece, "Azaria and Hushai," the latter, "Absalom Senior, or Absalom and Achitophel transposed." But these attempts to hurl back the satire at him by whom it was first launched, succeeded but indifferently, and might have convinced the authors that the charm of "Absalom and Achitophel" lay not in the plan, but in the power of execution. It was easy to give Jewish titles to their heroes, but the difficulty lay in drawing their characters with the force and precision of their prototype. Buckingham himself was rash enough to engage in this conflict; but whether his anger blunted his wit, or that his share in the "Rehearsal" was less even than what is generally supposed, he loses, by his "Reflections on Absalom and Achitophel," the credit we are disposed to allow him for talent on the score of that lively piece. A nonconformist clergyman published two pieces, which I have never seen, one entitled "A Whip for the Fool's Back, who styles honourable Marriage a cursed confinement, in his profane Poem of Absalom and Achitophel;" the other "A Key, with the Whip, to open the Mystery and Iniquity of the Poem called Absalom and Achitophel." Little was to be hoped or feared from poems bearing such absurd titles; I throw, however, into the note, the specimen which Mr. Malone has given of their contents.* The

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* "How well this Hebrew name with sense doth sound,
A fool's my brother,† though in wit profound!
Most wicked wits are the devil's chiefest tools,
Which, ever in the issue, God befools.
Can thy compare, vile varlet, once hold true,
Of the loyal lord, and this disloyal Jew?
Was e'er our English earl under disgrace,
And, as unconscionable, put out of place?
Hath he laid lurking in his country-house
To plot rebellions, as one factious?
Thy bog-trot bloodhounds hunted have this stag,
Yet cannot fasten their foul fangs,—they flag.
Why did'st not *thou* bring in thy evidence
With them, to rectify the brave jury's sense,

† *Achi*, my brother and *tophel*, a fool.—*Orig. Note.*

reverend gentleman having announced, that Achitophel, in Hebrew, means "the brother of a fool," Dryden retorted, with infinite coolness that in that case the author of the discovery might pass with his readers for next a-kin, and that it was probably the relation which made the kindness.

"The Medal" was answered by the same authors who replied to "Absalom and Achitophel," as if the Whigs had taken in sober earnest the advice which Dryden bestowed on them in the preface to that satire. And moreover (as he there expressly recommends) they railed at him abundantly, without a glimmering of wit to enliven their scurrility. Hickeringill, a crazy fanatic, began the attack with a sort of mad poem, called "The Mushroom." It was written and sent to press the very day on which "The Medal" appeared; a circumstance on which the author valued himself so highly as to ascribe it to divine inspiration. With more labour, and equal issue, Samuel Pordage, a minor poet of the day, produced "The Medal Reversed;" for which, and his former aggression, Dryden brands him, in a single line of the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel," as

"Lame Mephibosheth, the wizard's * son.

There also appeared, "The Loyal Medal Vindicated," and a piece, entitled "Dryden's Satire to his Muse," imputed to Lord Somers, but which, in conversation with Pope, he positively disavowed. All these and many other pieces, the fruits of incensed and almost frantic

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And so prevent the *ignoramus*?—nay,
Thou wast cock-sure he would be damn'd for aye,
Without thy presence;—thou wast then employ'd
To brand him 'gainst he came to be destroy'd:
'Forehand preparing for the hangman's axe,
Had not the witnesses been found so lax."

* He was the son of Dr. John Pordage, minister of Bradfield, expelled his charge for insufficiency in the year 1646. Among other charges against him were the following, which, extraordinary as they are, he does not seem to have denied:

"That he hath very frequent and familiar converse with angels.

"That a great dragon came into his chamber with a tail of eight yards long, four great teeth, and did spit fire at him; and that he contended with the dragon.

"That his own angel came and stood by him while he was expostulating with the dragon; and the angel came in his own shape and fashion, the same clothes, bands, and cuffs, the same bandstrings; and that his angel stood by him and upheld him.

"That Mrs. Pordage and Mrs. Flavel had their angels standing by them also, Mrs. Pordage singing sweetly, and keeping time upon her breast; and that his children saw the spirits coming into the house, and said, Look there, father; and that the spirits did after come into the chamber, and drew the curtains when they were in bed.

"That the said Mr. Pordage confessed that a strong enchantment was upon him, and that the devil did appear to him in the shape of Everard, and in the shape of a fiery dragon; and the whole roof of the house was full of spirits."—*State Trials.*

party-fury, are marked by the most coarse and virulent abuse. The events in our author's life were few, and his morals, generally speaking, irreproachable; so that the topics for the malevolence of his antagonists were both scanty and strained. But they ceased not, with the true pertinacity of angry dulness, to repeat, in prose and verse, in couplet, ballad, and madrigal, the same unvaried accusations, amounting in substance to the following: That Dryden had been bred a Puritan and Republican; that he had written a Eulogy on Cromwell, (which one wily adversary actually reprinted); that he had been in poverty at the Restoration; that Lady Elizabeth Dryden's character was tarnished by the circumstances attending their nuptials; that Dryden had written the "Essay on Satire," in which the King was libelled; that he had been beaten by three men in Rose-alley; finally, that he was a Tory, and a tool of arbitrary power. This cuckoo song, garnished with the burden of *Bayes* and *Poet Squab*,* was rung in the ear of the public again and again, and with an obstinacy which may convince us how little there was to be said, when that little was so often repeated. Feeble as these attacks were, their number, like that of the gnats described by Spenser, seems to have irritated Dryden to exert the power of his satire, and, like the blast of the northern wind, to sweep away at once these clamorous and busy, though ineffectual assailants. Two, in particular, claimed distinction from the nameless crowd; Settle, Dryden's ancient foe, and Shadwell, who had been originally a dubious friend.

Of Dryden's controversy with Settle we have already spoken fully; but we may here add, that, in addition to former offences of a public and private nature, Elkanah, in the Prologue to the "Emperor of Morocco," acted in March, 1681-2, had treated Dryden with great irreverence. Shadwell had been for some time in good habits with Dryden; yet an early difference of taste and practice in comedy, not only existed between them, but was the subject of reciprocal debate, and something approaching to rivalry. Dryden, as we have seen, had avowed his preference of lively dialogue in comedy to delineation of character; or, in other words, of wit and repartee to what was then called humour. On this subject Shadwell early differed from the laureate. Conscious of considerable powers in observing nature, while he was deficient in that liveliness of fancy which is necessary to produce vivacity of dialogue, Shadwell affected, or perhaps entertained, a profound veneration for the memory of Ben Jonson, and proposed him as his model in the representation of such characters as were to be marked by *humour*, or an affectation of singularity of manners, speech, and behaviour. Dryden, on the other hand, was no

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* How little Dryden valued these nicknames appears from a passage in the "Vindication of the Duke of Guise:"—"Much less am I concerned at the noble name of Bayes; that is a brat so like his own father, that he cannot be mistaken for anybody else. They might as reasonably have called Tom Sternhold Virgil, and the resemblance would have held as well."

great admirer either of Jonson's plays in general, or of the low and coarse characters of vice and folly, in describing which lay his chief excellency; and this opinion he had publicly intimated in the "Essay of Dramatic Poesy." In the preface to the very first of Shadwell's plays, printed in 1668, he takes occasion bitterly, and with a direct application to Dryden, to assail the grounds of this criticism, and the comedies of the author who had made it. If this petulance produced any animosity, it was not lasting; for, in the course of their controversy, Dryden appeals to Shadwell, whether he had not rather countenanced than impeded his first rise in public favour; and, in 1674, they made common cause with Crowne to write those remarks, which were to demolish Settle's "Empress of Morocco." Even in 1676, while Shadwell expresses the same dissent from Dryden's opinion concerning the merit of Jonson's comedy, it is in very respectful terms, and with great deference to his respected and admired friend, of whom, though he will not say his is the best way of writing, he maintains his manner of writing it is most excellent. But the irreconcilable difference in their tastes soon after broke out in less seemly terms; for Shadwell permitted himself to use some very irreverent expressions towards Dryden's play of "Aureng-Zebe," in the Prologue and Epilogue to his comedy of the "Virtuoso;" and in the preface to the same piece he plainly intimated, that he wanted nothing but a pension to enable him to write as well as the poet-laureate. This attack was the more intolerable, as Dryden, in the preface to that very play of "Aureng-Zebe," probably meant to include Shadwell among those contemporaries who, even in his own judgment, excelled him in comedy. In 1678 Dryden accommodated with a prologue Shadwell's play of the "True Widow;" but to write these occasional pieces was part of his profession, and the circumstance does not prove that the breach between these rivals for public applause was ever thoroughly healed; on the contrary, it seems likely, that, in the case of Shadwell, as in that of Settle, political hatred only gangrened a wound inflicted by literary rivalry. After their quarrel became desperate, Dryden resumed his prologue, and adapted it to a play by Afra Behn, called the "Widow Ranter, or Bacon in Virginia." Whatever was the progress of the dispute, it is certain that Shadwell as zealously attached to the Whig faction as Dryden to the Tories, buckled on his armour among the other poetasters to encounter the champion of royalty. His answer to "The Medal" is entitled "The Medal of John Bayes:" it appeared in autumn 1681, and is distinguished by scurrility, even among the scurrilous lampoons of Settle, Care, and Pordage. "Those," he coolly says, "who know Dryden, know there is not an untrue word spoke of him in the poem;" although he is there charged with the most gross and infamous crimes. Shadwell also seems to have had a share in a lampoon, entitled "The Tory Poets," in which both Dryden and Otway were grossly reviled. On both occasions his satire was as clumsy as his overgrown person, and as brutally coarse as his conversation: for Shadwell resembled

Ben Jonson in his vulgar and intemperate pleasures, as well as in his style of comedy and corpulence of body.* Dryden seems to have thought, that such reiterated attacks, from a contemporary of some eminence, whom he had once called friend, merited a more severe castigation than could be administered in a general satire. He therefore composed "Mac-Flecknoe, or a Satire on the True Blue Protestant Poet, T. S., by the author of Absalom and Achitophel," which was published 4th October, 1682. Richard Flecknoe, from whom the piece takes its title, was so distinguished as a wretched poet, that his name had become almost proverbial. Shadwell is represented as the adopted son of this venerable monarch, who so long

> "In prose and verse was own'd without dispute,
> Through all the realms of Nonsense absolute."

The solemn inauguration of Shadwell as his successor in this drowsy kingdom forms the plan of the poem; being the same which Pope afterwards adopted on a broader canvas for his "Dunciad." The vices and follies of Shadwell are not concealed, while the awkwardness of his pretensions to poetical fame are held up to the keenest ridicule. In an evil hour, leaving the composition of low comedy, in which he held an honourable station, he adventured upon the composition of operas and pastorals. On these the satirist falls without mercy; and ridicules, at the same time, his pretensions to copy Ben Jonson:

> "Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,
> By arrogating Jonson's hostile name;
> Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,
> And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
> Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part:
> What share have we in nature or in art?
> Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
> And rail at arts he did not understand?
> Where made he love in 'Prince Nicander's' vein,
> Or swept the dust in 'Psyche's' humble strain?"

This unmerciful satire was sold off in a very short time; and it seems uncertain whether it was again published until 1684, when it appeared with the author's name in Tonson's first Miscellany. It would seem that Dryden did not at first avow it, though as the title page assigned it to the author of "Absalom and Achitophel," we cannot believe Shadwell's assertion, that he had denied it with oaths and imprecations. Dryden, however, omits this satire in the printed

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* Jonson is described as wearing a loose coachman's coat, frequenting the Mermaid tavern, where he drunk seas of Canary, then reeling home to bed, and, after a profuse perspiration, arising to his dramatic studies. Shadwell appears, from the slight traits which remain concerning him, to have followed, as closely as possible, the same course of pleasure and of study. He was brutal in his conversation, and much addicted to the use of opium, to which, indeed, he is said finally to have fallen a victim.

list of his plays and poems, along with the Eulogy on Cromwell. But he was so far from disowning it, that, in his "Essay on Satire," he quotes "Mac-Flecknoe" as an instance given by himself of the Varronian satire. Poor Shadwell was extremely disturbed by this attack upon him; the more so, as he seems hardly to have understood its tendency. He seriously complains, that he is represented by Dryden as an Irishman, "when he knows that I never saw Ireland till I was three-and-twenty years old, and was there but for four months." He had understood Dryden's parable literally; so true it is, that a knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear.

"Mac-Flecknoe," though so cruelly severe, was not the only notice which Shadwell received of Dryden's displeasure at his person and politics. "Absalom and Achitophel," and "The Medal," having been so successful, a second part to the first poem was resolved on, for the purpose of sketching the minor characters of the contending factions. Dryden probably conceiving that he had already done his part, only revised this additional book, and contributed about two hundred lines. The body of the poem was writted by Nahum Tate, one of those second-rate bards, who, by dint of pleonasm and expletive, can find smooth lines if any one will supply them with ideas. The second Part of "Absalom and Achitophel" is, however, much beyond his usual pitch, and exhibits considerable marks of a careful revision by Dryden, especially in the satirical passages; for the eulogy on the Tory chiefs is in the flat and feeble strain of Tate himself, as is obvious when it is compared with the description of the Green-Dragon Club, the character of Corah, and other passages exhibiting marks of Dryden's hand.

But if the second part of "Absalom and Achitophel" fell below the first in its general tone, the celebrated passage inserted by possessed even a double portion of the original spirit. The victims whom he selected out of the partisans of Monmouth and Shaftesbury for his own particular severity, were Robert Ferguson, afterwards well known by the name of the Plotter; Forbes; Johnson, author of the parallel between James Duke of York, and Julian the Apostate; but above all, Settle and Shadwell, whom, under the names of Doeg and Og, he has depicted in the liveliest colours his poignant satire could afford. They who have patience to look into the lampoons which these worthies had published against Dryden, will, in reading his retort, be reminded of the combats between the giants and knights of romance. His antagonists came on with infinite zeal and fury, discharged their ill-aimed blows on every side, and exhausted their strength in violent and ineffectual rage. But the keen and trenchant blade of Dryden never makes a thrust in vain, and never strikes but at a vulnerable point. This is a peculiar attribute of his satire; and it is difficult for one assailed on a single ludicrous foible, to make good his respectability, though possessed of a thousand valuable qualities; as it was impossible for Achilles, invulnerable everywhere else, to survive the wound which a dexterous archer had

aimed at his heel. With regard to Settle, there is a contempt in Dryden's satire which approaches almost to good-humour, and plainly shows how far our poet was now from entertaining those apprehensions of rivalship, which certainly dictated his portion of the "Remarks on the Empress Morocco." Settle had now found his level, and Dryden no longer regarded him with a mixture of rage and apprehension, but with more appropriate feelings of utter contempt. This poor wight had acquired by practice, and perhaps from nature, more of a poetical ear than most of his contemporaries were gifted with. "His blundering melody," as Dryden terms it, is far sweeter to the ear than the flat and ineffectual couplets of Tate; nor are his verses always destitute of something approaching to poetic fancy and spirit. He certainly, in his transposition of "Absalom and Achitophel," mimicked the harmony of his original with more success than was attained by Shadwell, Buckingham, or Pordage. But in this facility of versification all his merit began and ended; in our author's phrase,

> "Doeg, though without knowing how or why,
> Made still a blundering kind of melody;
> Spurr'd boldly on, and dash'd through thick and thin,
> Through sense and nonsense, never out nor in;
> Free from all meaning, whether good or bad,
> And, in one word, heroically mad.
> He was too warm on picking-work to dwell,
> But faggotted his notions as they fell,
> And, if they rhymed and rattled, all was well."

Ere we take leave of Settle, it is impossible to omit mentioning his lamentable conclusion; a tale often told and moralized upon, and in truth a piece of very tragical mirth. Elkanah, we have seen, was at this period a zealous Whig; nay, he was so far in the confidence of Shaftesbury, that, under his direction, and with his materials, he had been entrusted to compose a noted libel against the Duke of York, entitled, "The Character of a Popish Successor." Having a genius for mechanics, he was also exalted to the manager of a procession for burning the Pope; which the Whigs celebrated with great pomp, as one of many artifices to inflame the minds of the people. To this, and to the fireworks which attended its solemnization, Dryden alludes in the lines to which Elkanah's subsequent disasters gave an air of prophecy:

> "In fireworks give him leave to vent his spite,
> Those are the only serpents he can write;
> The height of his ambition is, we know,
> But to be master of a puppet-show;
> On that one stage his works may yet appear,
> And a month's harvest keeps him all the year."

Notwithstanding the rank he held among the Whig authors, Settle, perceiving the cause of his patron Shaftesbury was gradually becoming weaker, fairly abandoned him to his fate, and read a solemn

recantation of his political errors in a narrative published in 1683. The truth seems to be, that honest Doeg was poet-laureate to the city, and earned some emolument by composing verses for pageants and other occasions of civic festivity; so that when the Tory interest resumed its ascendancy among the magistrates, he had probably no alternative but to relinquish his principles or his post, and Elkanah, like many greater men, held the former the easier sacrifice. Like all converts he became outrageous in his new faith, wrote a libel on Lord Russell a few days after his execution; indited a panegyric on Judge Jefferies; and, being *tam Marte quam Mercurio*, actually joined as a trooper the army which King James encamped upon Hounslow Heath. After the Revolution, he is enumerated, with our author and Tate, among those poets whose strains had been stifled by that great event. He continued, however, to be the city-laureate; but, in despite of that provision, was reduced by want to write plays, like Ben Jonson's Littlewit, for the profane *motions*, or puppet-shows, of Smithfield and Bartholomew fairs. Nay, having proceeded thus far in exhibiting the truth of Dryden's prediction, he actually mounted the stage in person among these wooden performers, and combated St. George for England in a green dragon of his own proper device. Settle was admitted into the Charter House in his old age, and died there in 1723. The lines of Pope on poor Elkanah's fate are familiar to every poetical reader:

"In Lud's old walls though long I ruled, renown'd
Far as loud Bow's stupendous bells resound;
Though my own aldermen conferr'd the bays,
To me committing their eternal praise,
Their full-fed heroes, their pacific mayors,
Their annual trophies, and their monthly wars;
Though long my party built on me their hopes,
For writing pamphlets, and for roasting popes;
Yet lo! in me what authors have to brag on!
Reduced at last to hiss in my own dragon.
Avert it, heaven! that thou, or Cibber, e'er
Should wag a serpent-tail in Smithfield fair!
Like the vile straw that's blown about the streets,
The needy poet sticks to all he meets:
Coach'd, carted, trod upon, now loose, now fast,
And carried off in some dog's-tail at last."

As Dryden was probably more apprehensive of Shadwell, who, though a worse poet than Settle, has excelled even Dryden in the lower walks of comedy, he has treated him with sterner severity. His person, his morals, his manners, and his politics, all that had escaped or been but slightly touched upon in "MacFlecknoe," are bitterly reviewed in the character of Og; and there probably never existed another poet, who, at the distance of a month, which intervened between the publication of the two poems, could resume an exhausted theme with an energy which gave it all the charms of novelty. Shadwell did not remain silent beneath the lash; but his clamorous exclamations only tended to make his castigation more ludicrous.

The Second Part of "Absalom and Achitophel" was followed by the "Religio Laici," a poem which Dryden published in the same month of November, 1682. Its tendency, although of a political nature, is so different from that of the satires, that it will be most properly considered when we can place it in contrast to the "Hind and the Panther." It was addressed to Henry Dickinson, a young gentleman, who had just published a translation of Simon's "Critical History of the New Testament."

As the publication of the two Parts of "Absalom and Achitophel," "The Medal," and "MacFlecknoe," all of a similar tone, and rapidly succeeding each other, gave to Dryden, hitherto chiefly known as a dramatist, the formidable character of an inimitable satirist, we may here pause to consider their effect upon English poetry. The witty Bishop Hall had first introduced into our literature that species of poetry, which, though its legitimate use be to check vice and expose folly, is so often applied by spleen or by faction to destroy domestic happiness, by assailing private character. Hall possessed a good ear for harmony; and, living in the reign of Elizabeth, might have studied it in Spenser, Fairfax, and other models. But from system, rather than ignorance or inability, he chose to be "hard of conceit, and harsh of style," in order that his poetry might correspond with the sharp, sour, and crabbed nature of his theme. Donne, his successor, was still more rugged in his versification, as well as more obscure in his conceptions and allusions. The satires of Cleveland (as we have indeed formerly noticed) are, if possible, still harsher and more strained in expression than those of Donne. Butler can hardly be quoted as an example of the sort of satire we are treating of. "Hudibras" is a burlesque tale, in which the measure is intentionally and studiously rendered as ludicrous as the characters and incidents. Oldham, who flourished in Dryden's time, and enjoyed his friendship, wrote his satires in the crabbed tone of Cleveland and Donne. Dryden, in the copy of verses dedicated to his memory, alludes to this deficiency, and seems to admit the subject as an apology:

> "O early ripe! to thy abundant store
> What could advancing age have added more!
> It might (what nature never gives the young)
> Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.
> But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
> Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line."

Yet the apology which he admitted for Oldham, Dryden disdained to make use of himself. He did not, as has been said of Horace, wilfully untune his harp when he commenced satirist. Aware that a wound may be given more deeply with a burnished than with a rusty blade, he bestowed upon the versification of his satires the same pains which he had given to his rhyming plays and serious poems. He did not, indeed, for that would have been pains misapplied, attempt to smooth his verses into the harmony of those in which he occasionally

celebrates female beauty, but he gave them varied tone, correct rhyme, and masculine energy, all which had hitherto been strangers to the English satire. Thus, while Dryden's style resembled that of Juvenal rather than Horace, he may claim a superiority, for uniform and undeviating dignity, over the Roman satirist. The age, whose appetite for scandal had been profusely fed by lampoons and libels, now learned that there was a more elevated kind of satire, in which poignancy might be united with elegance, and energy of thought with harmony of versification. The example seems to have produced a strong effect. No poet, not even Settle (for even the worst artist will improve from beholding a masterpiece), afterwards conceived he had sufficiently accomplished his task by presenting to the public thoughts, however witty or caustic he might deem them, clothed in the hobbling measure of Donne or Cleveland; and expression and harmony began to be consulted, in satire, as well as sarcastic humour or powerful illustration.

"MacFlecknoe," in some degree, differs from the other satires which Dryden published at this time. It is not confined to the description of character, but exhibits an imaginary course of incidents, in which the principal personage takes a ludicrous share. In this it resembles "Hudibras," and both are quoted by Dryden himself as examples of the Varronian satire, but there was this pointed difference, that Butler's poem is burlesque, and Dryden's mock-heroic. "MacFlecknoe" is, I rather believe, the first poem in the English language in which the dignity of a harmonized and lofty style is employed, not only to excite pleasure in itself, but to increase, by contrast, the comic effect of the scenes which it narrates, the subject being ludicrous, while the verse is noble. The models of satire afforded by Dryden, as they have never been equalled by any succeeding poet, were in a tone of excellence, superior far to all that had preceded them.

These reflections on the nature of Dryden's satires have, in some degree, interrupted our account of his poetical controversies. Not only did he pour forth these works, one after another, with a fertility which seemed to imply delight in his new labour; but, as if the spirit of the time had taught him speed, he found leisure to oppose the Whigs in the theatre, where the audience was now nearly as much divided as the kingdom by the contending factions. Settle had produced the tragedy of "Pope Joan," Shadwell the comedy of the "Lancashire Witches," to expose to hatred and ridicule the religion of the successor to the crown. Otway and D'Urfey, Crowne and Southerne, names unequalled in fame, vied in producing plays against the Whigs which might counterbalance the effect of these popular dramas. A licence similar to that of Aristophanes was introduced on the English stage, and living personages were exhibited under very slight disguises. In the prologues and epilogues, which then served as a sort of moral to the plays, the veil, thin as it was, was completely raised, and the political analogies pointed out to such of the audience as might otherwise have been too dull to apprehend them. In this sharp though

petty war Dryden bore a considerable share. His necessities obliged him, among other modes of increasing his income, to accept of a small pecuniary tribute for furnishing prologues on remarkable occasions, or for new plays, and his principles determined their tendency. But this was not all the support which his party expected, and which he afforded them on the theatre, even while labouring in their service in a different department.

When Dryden had but just finished his "Religio Laici," Lee, who had assisted in the play of "Œdipus," claimed Dryden's promise to requite the obligation. It has been already noticed that Dryden had, in the year succeeding the Restoration, designed a play on the subject of the Duke of Guise, and he has informed us he had preserved one or two of the scenes. These, therefore, were revised, and inserted in the new play, of which Dryden wrote the first scene, the whole fourth act, and great part of the fifth. Lee composed the rest of "The Duke of Guise." The general parallel between the League in France and the Covenant in England was too obvious to escape early notice, but the return of Monmouth to England against the king's express command, in order to head the opposition, perhaps the insurrection, of London, presented a still closer analogy to the entry of the Duke of Guise into Paris, under similar circumstances, on the famous day of the barricades. Of this remarkable incident the united authors of "The Duke of Guise" naturally availed themselves, though with such precaution that almost the very expressions of the scene are taken from the prose of Davila. Yet the plot, though capable of an application so favourable for the royal party, contained circumstances of offence to it. If the parallel between Guise and Monmouth was, on the one hand, felicitous, as pointing out the nature of the duke's designs, the moral was revolting, as seeming to recommend the assassination of Charles's favourite son. The king also loved Monmouth to the very last, and was slow and reluctant in permitting his character to be placed in a criminal or odious point of view.* The play, therefore, though ready for exhibition before Midsummer, 1682, remained in the hands of Arlington, the Lord Chamberlain, for two months without being licensed for representation, but during that time the scene darkened. The king had so far suppressed his tenderness for Monmouth as to authorize his arrest at Stafford, and the influence of the Duke of York at court became daily more predominant. Among other evident tokens that no measures were henceforward to be kept between the king and Monmouth the representation of "The Duke of Guise" was at length authorized.

The two companies of players, after a long and expensive warfare, had now united their forces; on which occasion Dryden furnished

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* The concealed partiality of Charles towards Monmouth survived even the discovery of the Rye House Plot. He could not dissemble his satisfaction upon seeing him after his surrender, and pressed his hand affectionately.—See Monmouth's Diary in *Wellwood's Memorials.*

them with a prologue, full of violent Tory principles. By this united company "The Duke of Guise" was performed on the 30th December, 1682. It was printed with a dedication to Hyde, Earl of Rochester, subscribed by both authors, but evidently the work of Dryden. It is written in a tone of defiance to the Whig authors, who had assailed the dedicators, it alleges, "like footpads in the dark," though their blows had done little harm, and the objects of their malice yet lived to vindicate their loyalty in open day. The play itself has as determined a political character as the dedication. Besides the general parallel between the leaguers and the fanatical sectaries, and the more delicate, though not less striking, connexion between the story of Guise and of Monmouth, there are other collateral allusions in the piece to the history of that unfortunate nobleman, and to the state of parties. The whole character of Marmoutiere, high spirited, loyal, and exerting all her influence to deter Guise from the prosecution of his dangerous schemes, corresponds to that of Anne, Duchess of Monmouth.* The love too which the king professes to Marmoutiere, and which excites the jealousy of Guise, may bear a remote and delicate allusion to that partiality which the Duke of York is said to have entertained for the wife of his nephew.† The amiable colours in which Marmoutiere is painted, were due to the Duchess of Monmouth, Dryden's especial patroness. Another more obvious and more offensive parallel existed between the popular party in the city, with the Whig sheriffs at their head, and that of the *Echevins*, or sheriffs of Paris, violent demagogues and adherents to the League, and who, in the play, are treated

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* Carte, in his "Life of the Duke of Ormond," says, that Monmouth's resolutions varied from submission to resistance against the king, according to his residence with the Duchess at Moor Park, who schooled him to the former course, or with his associates and partisans in the city, who instigated him to more desperate resolutions.

† This Dryden might learn from Mulgrave, who mentions in his Memoirs, as a means of Monmouth's advancement, the "great friendship which the Duke of York had openly professed to his wife, a lady of wit and reputation, who had both the ambition of making her husband considerable, and the address of succeeding in it, by using her interest in so friendly an uncle, whose design I believe was only to convert her. Whether this familiarity of theirs was contrived or only connived at by the Duke of Monmouth himself, is hard to determine. But I remember, that after these two princes had become declared enemies, the Duke of York one day told me, with some emotion, as conceiving it a new mark of his nephew's insolence, that he had forbidden his wife to receive any more visits from him; at which I could not help frankly replying, that I, who was not used to excuse him, yet could not hold from doing it in that case, wishing his highness might have no juster cause to complain of him. Upon which the duke, surprised to find me excuse his and my own enemy, changed the discourse immediately."—*Memoirs*, p. 13.

I have perused letters from Sir Gideon Scott of Highchester to the Duchess of Monmouth, recommending a prudent and proper attention to the Duke of York: and this advice she probably followed; for, after her husband's execution, James restored to her all her family estates. Sir Gideon's son had been married to the Duchess' eldest sister.

with great contumely by Grillon and the royal guards. The tumults which had taken place at the election of these magistrates were warm in the recollection of the city; and the commitment of the ex-sheriffs, Shute and Pilkington, to the Tower, under pretext of a riot, was considered as the butt of the poet's satire. Under these impressions the Whigs made a violent opposition to the representation of the piece, even when the king gave it his personal countenance. And although in despite of them, "The Duke of Guise" so far succeeded, as "to be frequently acted, and never without a considerable attendance," we may conclude from these qualified expressions of the author himself, that the play was never eminently popular. He, who writes for a party, can only please at most one half of his audience.

It was not to be expected that, at a time so very critical, a public representation, including such bold allusions, or rather parallels, should pass without critical censure. "The Duke of Guise" was attacked by Dryden's old foe Shadwell, in some verses, entitled, "A Lenten Prologue refused by the Players;" and more formally, in "Reflections on the pretended Parallel in the Play called the Duke of Guise." In this pamphlet Shadwell seems to have been assisted by a gentleman of the Temple, so zealous for the popular cause, that Dryden says he was detected disguised in a livery-gown, proffering his vote at the Common-hall. Thomas Hunt, a barrister, likewise stepped forth on this occasion; and in his "Defence of the Charter of London," then challenged by the famous process of *Quo Warranto*, he accuses Dryden of having prepared the way for that arbitrary step, by the degrading representation of their magistrates executed in effigy upon the stage. Dryden thought these pamphlets of consequence enough to deserve an answer, and published, soon after, "The Vindication of the Duke of Guise." In perusing the controversy, we may admire two circumstances, eminently characteristic of the candour with which such controversies are usually maintained. First, the anxiety with which the critics labour to fix upon Dryden a disrespectful parallel between Charles II. and Henry II. of France, which certainly our author did not propose to carry farther than their common point of situation; and secondly, the labour with which he disavows what he unquestionably did intend,—a parallel between the rebellious conduct of Monmouth and of Guise. The vindication is written in a tone of sovereign contempt for the adversaries, particularly for Shadwell. Speaking of Thomas Hunt, Dryden says,—"Even this their celebrated writer knows no more of style and English than the Northern dictator; as if dulness and clumsiness were fatal to the name of *Tom*. It is true, he is a fool in three languages more than the poet; for, they say, 'he understands Latin, Greek, and Hebrew,' from all which, to my certain knowledge, I acquit the other. Og may write against the king, if he pleases, so long as he drinks for him, and his writings will never do the government so much harm, as his drinking does it good; for true subjects will not be much perverted by his libels; but the wine-duties rise considerably by his claret. He has often called mo

an atheist in print; I would believe more charitably of him, and that he only goes the broad way, because the other is too narrow for him. He may see, by this, I do not delight to meddle with his course of life and his immoralities, though I have a long bead-roll of them. I have hitherto contented myself with the ridiculous part of him, which is enough, in all conscience, to employ one man; even without the story of his late fall at the Old Devil, where he broke no ribs, because the hardness of the stairs could reach no bones; and, for my part, I do not wonder how he came to fall, for I have always known him heavy: the miracle is how he got up again. I have heard of a sea captain as fat as he, who, to escape arrests, would lay himself flat upon the ground, and let the bailiffs carry him to prison if they could. If a messenger or two, nay, we may put in three or four, should come, he has friendly advertisement how to escape them. But to leave him, who is not worth any further consideration, now I have done laughing at him,—would every man knew his own talent, and that they, who are only born for drinking, would let both poetry and prose alone!" This was the last distinct and prolonged animadversion which our author bestowed upon his corpulent antagonist.

Soon after this time Dryden wrote a biographical preface to "Plutarch's Lives," of which a new translation, by several hands, was in the press. The dedication is addressed to the Duke of Ormond, the Barzillai of "Absalom and Achitophel," whom Charles, after a long train of cold and determined neglect, had in emergency recalled to his favour and his councils. The first volume of "Plutarch's Lives," with Dryden's Life of the author, appeared in 1683.

About the same time, the king's express command engaged Dryden in a work, which may be considered as a sort of illustration of the doctrines laid down in the "Vindication of the Duke of Guise." It was the translation of Maimbourg's "History of the League," expressly composed to draw a parallel between the Huguenots of France and the Leaguers, as both equal enemies of the monarchy. This comparison was easily transferred to the sectaries of England, and the association proposed by Shaftesbury. The work was published with unusual solemnity of title-page and frontispiece; the former declaring that the translation was made by his Majesty's command; the latter representing Charles on his throne, surrounded by emblems expressive of hereditary and indefeasible right. The dedication to the king contains sentiments which savour strongly of party violence, and even ferocity. The forgiving disposition of the king is, according to the dedicator, the encouragement of the conspirators. Like Antæus, they rise refreshed from a single overthrow. "These sons of earth are never to be trusted in their mother element; they must be hoisted into the air and strangled." Thus exasperated were the most gentle tempers in those times of doubt and peril. The rigorous tone adopted confirms the opinion of those historians who observe, that, after the discovery of the Rye House Plot, Charles was fretted out of his usual debonair ease, and became more morose and severe than had been hitherto thought consistent with his disposition.

This translation was to be the last service which Dryden was to render his good-humoured, selfish, and thoughtless patron. While the laureate was preparing for the stage the opera of "Albion and Albanius," intended to solemnize the triumph of Charles over the Whigs, or, as the author expressed it, the double restoration of his sacred majesty, the king died of an apoplexy upon the 6th February, 1684-5. His death opened to many, and to Dryden among others, new hopes, and new prospects, which were, in his instance, doomed to terminate in disappointment and disgrace. We may therefore pause, and review the private life of the poet during the period which has occupied our last chapters.

The vigour and rapidity with which Dryden poured forth his animated satire, plainly intimates that his mind was pleased with the exercise of that formidable power. It was more easy for him, he has himself told us, to write with severity, than with forbearance; and indeed, where is the expert swordsman who does not delight in the flourish of his weapon? Neither could this self-complacent feeling be much allayed by the vague and abusive ribaldry with which his satire was repaid. This was natural to the controversy, was no more than he expected, and was easily retorted with treble interest. "As for knave," says he, "and sycophant, and rascal, and impudent, and devil, and old serpent, and a thousand such good morrows, I take them to be only names of parties; and could return murderer, and cheat, and whig-napper, and sodomite; and, in short, the goodly number of the seven deadly sins, with all their kindred and relations, which are names of parties too; but saints will be saints, in spite of villany." With such feelings, we may believe Dryden's rest was little disturbed by the litter of libels against him:—

> "Sons of a day just buoyant on the flood,
> Then number'd with the puppies in the mud."

But he who keenly engages in political controversy, must not only encounter the vulgar abuse, which he may justly contemn, but the altered eye of friends, whose regard is chilled or alienated. That Dryden sustained such misfortune we cannot doubt, when he informs us, that, out of the large party in opposition, comprehending doubtless many men of talent and eminence, who were formerly familiar with him, he had during the course of a whole year only spoken to four, and to those but casually and cursorily, and only to express a wish that the times might come when the names of Whig and Tory might be abolished, and men live together as they had done before they were introduced.

Neither did the protecting zeal of his party-friends compensate for the loss of those whom Dryden had alienated in their service. True it is, that a host of Tory rhymers came forward with complimentary verses to the author of "Absalom and Achitophel" and of "The Medal." But of all payment, that in kind is least gratifying to a poverty-struck bard, and the courtly patrons of Dryden were in no haste to make him more substantial requital. A gratuity of a

hundred broad pieces is said to have been paid him by Charles for one of his satires; but no permanent provision was made for him. He was coolly left to increase his pittance by writing occasional pieces; and it was probably with this view that he arranged for publication a miscellaneous collection of poetry, which he afterwards continued. It was published for Tonson in 1683-4, and contained several versions of Epistles from Ovid, and translations of detached pieces of Virgil, Horace, and Theocritus, with some smaller pieces by Dryden himself, and a variety of poems by other hands. The epistles had appeared in 1680, in a version of the original by several hands, to which Dryden also contributed an introductory discourse on translation. Contrary to our author's custom, the miscellany appeared without either preface or dedication.

The miscellany, among other minor poems of Dryden, contained many of his occasional prologues and epilogues, the composition of which his necessity had rendered so important a branch of income, that, in the midst of his splendour of satirical reputation, the poet was obliged to chaffer about the scanty recompense which he drew from such petty sources. Such a circumstance attended the commencement of his friendship with Southerne. That poet then opening his dramatic career with the play of the "Loyal Brother," came, as was usual, to request a prologue from Dryden, and to offer him the usual compliment of five guineas. But the laureate demurred, and insisted upon double the sum; "not out of disrespect," he added, "to you, young man; but the players have had my goods too cheap." Hence Southerne, who was peculiarly fortunate in his dramatic revenue, is designed by Pope as

> "Tom sent down to raise
> The price of prologues and of plays."

It may seem surprising that Dryden should be left to make an object of such petty gains, when, labouring for the service of government, he had in little more than twelve months produced both Parts of "Absalom and Achitophel," "The Medal," "MacFlecknoe," "Religio Laici," and "The Duke of Guise." But this was not the worst; for, although his pension as poet-laureate was apparently all the encouragement which he received from the crown, so ill-regulated were the finances of Charles, so expensive his pleasures, and so greedy his favourites, that our author, shortly after finishing these immortal poems, was compelled to sue for more regular payment of that very pension, and for a more permanent provision, in the following affecting Memorial, addressed to Hyde, Earl of Rochester:—"I would plead," says he, "a little merit, and some hazards of my life from the common enemies; my refusing advantages offered by them, and neglecting my beneficial studies, for the king's service; but I only think I merit not to starve. I never applied myself to any interest contrary to your lordship's; and, on some occasions, perhaps not known to you, have not been unserviceable to the memory and reputation of my lord, your

father.* After this, my lord, my conscience assures me, I may write boldly, though I cannot speak to you. I have three sons, growing to man's estate. I breed them all up to learning, beyond my fortune; but they are too hopeful to be neglected, though I want. Be pleased to look on me with an eye of compassion: some small employment would render my condition easy. The King is not unsatisfied of me; the Duke has often promised me his assistance; and your lordship is the conduit through which their favours pass. Either in the customs, or the appeals of the excise, or some other way, means cannot be wanting, if you please to have the will. *'Tis enough for one age to have neglected Mr. Cowley, and starved Mr. Butler;* but neither of them had the happiness to live till your lordship's ministry. In the meantime, be pleased to give me a gracious and a speedy answer to my present request of half a year's pension for my necessities. I am going to write somewhat by his Majesty's commands,† and cannot stir into the country for my health and studies till I secure my family from want."

We know that this affecting remonstrance was in part successful; for long afterwards, he says, in allusion to this period, "Even from a bare treasury, my success has been contrary to that of Mr. Cowley; and Gideon's fleece has there been moistened, when all the ground was dry." But in the admission of this claim to the more regular payment of his pension, was comprehended all Rochester's title to Dryden's gratitude. The poet could not obtain the small employment which he so earnestly solicited; and such was the recompense of the merry monarch and his counsellors, to one whose productions had strengthened the pillars of his throne, as well as renovated the literary taste of the nation.

CHAPTER VI.

Threnodia Augustalis—Albion and Albanius—Dryden becomes a Catholic—The Controversy of Dryden with Stillingfleet—The Hind and the Panther—Life of St. Francis Xavier—Consequences of the Revolution to Dryden—Don Sebastian—King Arthur—Cleomenes—Love Triumphant.

THE accession of James II. to the British throne excited new hopes in all orders of men. On the accession of a new prince, the loyal looked to rewards, the rebellious to amnesty. The Catholics exulted in beholding one of their persuasion attain the crown after an interval of two centuries; the Church of England expected the fruits of her unlimited devotion to the royal line; even the sectaries might

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* Probably alluding to the author having defended Clarendon in public company; for nothing of the kind occurs in Dryden's publications.

† Probably the translation of "Religio Laici."

hope indulgence from a prince whose religion deviated from that established by law as widely as their own. All therefore hastened, in sugared addresses, to lament the sun which had set, and hail the beams of that which had arisen. Dryden, among other expectants, chose the more honourable of these themes: and in the "Threnodia Augustalis," at once paid a tribute to the memory of the deceased monarch, and decently solicited the attention of his successor. But although he had enjoyed personal marks of the favour of Charles, they were of a nature too unsubstantial to demand a deep tone of sorrow. "Little was the muses' hire, and light their gain;" and "the pension of a prince's praise" is stated to have been all their encouragement. Dryden, therefore, by no means sorrowed as if he had no hope; but, having said all that was decently mournful over the bier of Charles, tuned his lyrics to a sounding close in praise of James.

About the same time, Dryden resumed, with new courage, the opera of "Albion and Albanius," which had been nearly finished before the death of Charles. This was originally designed as a masque, or emblematical prelude to the play of "King Arthur;" for Dryden, wearied with the inefficient patronage of Charles, from whom he only "received fair words," had renounced in despair the task of an epic poem, and had converted one of his themes, that of the tale of Arthur, into the subject of a romantic drama. As the epic was to have been adapted to the honour and praise of Charles and his brother, the opera had originally the same political tendency. "Albion and Albanius" was a sort of introductory masque, in which, under a very thin veil of allegory, first, the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne, and, secondly, their escape from the Rye House Plot, and the recent conquest over their Whig opponents, were successively represented. The death of Charles made little alteration in this piece: it cost but the addition of an apotheosis; and the opera concluded with the succession of James to the throne, from which he had been so nearly excluded. These topics were, however, temporary; and, probably from the necessity of producing it while the allusions were fresh and obvious, "Albion and Albanius" was detached from "King Arthur," which was not in such a state of forwardness. Great expense was bestowed in bringing forward this piece, and the scenery seems to have been unusually perfect; particularly the representation of a celestial phenomenon, actually seen by Captain Gunman of the navy, whose evidence is quoted in the printed copies of the play.* The music of "Albion and Albanius" was arranged by Grabut, a Frenchman, whose name does not stand high as a composer. Yet Dryden pays him some compliments in the preface of the piece, which were considered as derogatory to Purcel and the English school, and gave great offence to a class of persons at least as irritable as their brethren the poets. This, among other causes, seems to have injured the success of the piece. But its deathblow was the news of the Duke of Mon-

* It formed the machine on which Iris appeared.

month's invasion, which reached London on Saturday, 13th June, 1685, while "Albion and Albanius" was performing for the sixth time: the audience broke up in consternation, and the piece was never again repeated. This opera was prejudicial to the company, who were involved by the expense in a considerable debt, and never recovered half the money laid out. Neither was it of service to our poet's reputation, who had, on this occasion, to undergo the gibes of angry musicians, as well as the reproaches of disappointed actors and hostile poets. One went so far as to suggest, with some humour, that probably the laureate and Grabut had mistaken their trade; the former writing the music, and the latter the verse.

We have now reached a remarkable incident in our author's life, namely, his conversion to the Catholic faith, which took place shortly after the accession of James II. to the British throne. The biographer of Dryden must feel considerable difficulty in discussing the probable causes of his change. Although this essay be intended to contain the life, not the apology of the poet, it is the duty of the writer to place such circumstances in view, as may qualify the strong prepossession at first excited by a change of faith against the individual who makes it. This prepossession, powerful in every case, becomes doubly so, if the step be taken at a time when the religion adopted seems more readily to pave the way for the temporal prosperity of the proselyte. Even where the grounds of conviction are ample and undeniable, we have a respect for those who suffer, rather than renounce a mistaken faith, when it is discountenanced or persecuted. A brave man will least of all withdraw himself from his ancient standard when the tide of battle beats against it. On the other hand, those who at such a period admit conviction to the better and predominant doctrine, are viewed with hatred by the members of the deserted creed, and with doubt by their new brethren in faith. Many who adopted Christianity in the reign of Constantine were doubtless sincere proselytes, but we do not find that any of them have been canonized. These feelings must be allowed powerfully to affect the mind, when we reflect that Dryden, a servant of the court, and zealously attached to the person of James, to whom he looked for the reward of long and faithful service, did not receive any mark of royal favour until he professed himself a member of the religion for which that king was all but an actual martyr. There are other considerations, however, greatly qualifying the conclusions which might be drawn from these suspicious circumstances, and tending to show that Dryden's conversion was at least in a great measure effected by sincere conviction. The principal clue to the progress of his religious principles is to be found in the poet's own lines in "The Hind and the Panther;" and may, by a very simple commentary, be applied to the state of his religious opinions at different periods of his life:

> "My thoughtless youth was wing'd with vain desires;
> My manhood, long misled by wandering fires,

Follow'd false lights; and, when their glimpse was gone,
My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
Such was I, such by nature still I am;
Be thine the glory, and be mine the shame!"

The "vain desires" of Dryden's "thoughtless youth" require no explanation: they obviously mean, that inattention to religious duties which the amusements of youth too frequently occasion. The "false lights" which bewildered the poet's manhood, were, I doubt not, the puritanical tenets, which, coming into the world under the auspices of his fanatical relations, Sir Gilbert Pickering and Sir John Driden, he must have at least professed, but probably seriously entertained. It must be remembered that the poet was thirty years of age at the Restoration; so that a considerable space of his full-grown manhood had passed while the rigid doctrines of the fanatics were still the order of the day. But the third state of his opinions, those "sparkles which his pride struck out," after the delusions of puritanism had vanished; in other words, those sentiments which he imbibed after the Restoration, and which immediately preceded his adoption of the Catholic faith, cannot be ascertained without more minute investigation. We may at the outset be easily permitted to assume, that the adoption of a fixed creed of religious principles was not the first business of our author, when that merry period set him free from the rigorous fetters of fanaticism. Unless he differed more than we can readily believe from the public feeling at that time, Dryden was satisfied to give to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's, without being in a hurry to fulfil the counterpart of the precept. Foremost in the race of pleasure, engaged in labours alien from serious reflection, the favourite of the most lively and dissolute nobility whom England ever saw, religious thoughts were not, at this period, likely to intrude frequently upon his mind, or to be encouraged when they did so. The time, therefore, when Dryden began seriously to compare the doctrines of the contending sects of Christianity, was probably several years after the Restoration, when reiterated disappointment, and satiety of pleasure, prompted his mind to retire within itself, and think upon hereafter. The "Religio Laici," published in 1682, evinces that, previous to composing that poem, the author had bestowed serious consideration upon the important subjects of which it treats; and I have postponed the analysis of it to this place, in order that the reader may be able to form his own conjecture from what faith Dryden changed when he became a Catholic.

The "Religio Laici" has indeed a political tendency, being written to defend the Church of England against the sectaries: it is not, therefore, so much from the conclusions of the piece, as from the mode of the author's deducing these conclusions, that Dryden's real opinions may be gathered;—as we learn nothing of the bowl's bias from its having reached its mark, though something may be conjectured by observing the course which it described in attaining it. From many minute particulars, I think it almost decisive that Dry-

den, when he wrote the "Religio Laici," was sceptical concerning revealed religion. I do not mean that his doubts were of that fixed and permanent nature, which have at different times induced men, of whom better might have been hoped, to pronounce themselves free-thinkers on principle. On the contrary, Dryden seems to have doubted with such a strong wish to believe, as, accompanied with circumstances of extrinsic influence, led him finally into the opposite extreme of credulity. His view of the doctrines of Christianity, and of its evidence, were such as could not legitimately found him in the conclusions he draws in favour of the Church of England; and accordingly, in adopting them, he evidently stretches his complaisance towards the national religion, while perhaps in his heart he was even then disposed to think there was no middle course between natural religion and the Church of Rome. The first creed which he examines is that of Deism; which he rejects, because the worship of one sole deity was not known to the philosophers of antiquity, and is therefore obviously to be ascribed to revelation. Revelation thus proved, the puzzling doubt occurs, whether the Scripture, as contended by Calvinists, was to be the sole rule of faith, or whether the rules and traditions of the church are to be admitted in explanation of the holy text. Here Dryden does not hesitate to point out the inconveniences ensuing from making the sacred page the subject of the dubious and commentary of the laity at large: when

> "The common rule was made the common prey,
> And at the mercy of the rabble lay;
> The tender page with horny fists was gall'd,
> And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd;
> The spirit gave the doctoral degree,
> And every member of a company
> Was of his trade and of the Bible free."

This was the rule of the sectaries,—of those whose innovations seemed, in the eyes of the Tories, to be again bursting in upon monarchy and episcopacy with the strength of a land-flood. Dryden therefore at once, and heartily, reprobates it. But the opposite extreme of admitting the authority of the church as omnipotent in deciding all matters of faith, he does not give up with the same readiness. The extreme convenience, nay, almost necessity, for such authority, is admitted in these remarkable lines:

> "Such an omniscient church we *wish* indeed;
> *'Twere worth both Testaments, cast in the Creed.*"

A wish, so forcibly expressed, shows a strong desire on the part of the poet to be convinced of the existence of that authority to which he so ardently desired to submit himself. And the argument which Dryden considers as conclusive against the existence of such an omniscient church, is precisely that which a subtle Catholic would find little trouble in repelling. If there be such a church, says Dryden,

why does it not point out the corruption of the canon, and restore it where lost? The answer is obvious, providing that the infallibility of the church be previously assumed; for where can be the necessity of restoring or explaining Scripture, if God has given to Pope and Council the inspiration necessary to settle all doubts in matters of faith? Dryden must have perceived where this argument led him, and he rather compounds with the difficulty than faces it. The Scripture, he admits, must be the rule on the one hand; but, on the other, it was to be qualified by the traditions of the earlier ages, and the exposition of learned men. And he concludes, boldly enough:

> "Shall I speak plain, and, in a nation free,
> Assume an honest layman's liberty?
> I think, according to my little skill,
> To my own mother-church submitting still,
> That many have been saved, and many may,
> Who never heard this question brought in play.
> The unletter'd Christian, who believes in gross,
> Plods on to heaven, and ne'er is at a loss;
> For the strait gate would be made straiter yet,
> Were none admitted there but men of wit."

This seems to be a plain admission, that the author was involved in a question from which he saw no very decided mode of extricating himself; and that the best way was to think as little as possible upon the subject. But this was a sorry conclusion for affording firm foundation in religious faith.

Another doubt appears to have puzzled Dryden so much, as to lead him finally to the Catholic faith for its solution. This was the future fate of those who never heard the gospel preached, supposing belief in it essential to salvation:

> "Because a general law is that alone,
> Which must to all, and everywhere, be known.'

Dryden, it is true, founds upon the mercy of the Deity a hope, that the benefit of the propitiatory sacrifice of our Mediator may be extended to those who knew not of its power. But the creed of St. Athanasius stands in the poet's road; and though he disposes of it with less reverence to the patriarch than is quite seemly, there is an indecision, if not in his conclusion, at least in his mode of deducing it, that shows an apt inclination to cut the knot, and solve the objection of the Deist, by alleging that belief in the Christian religion is an essential requisite to salvation.

If I am right in these remarks, it will follow, that Dryden never could be a firm or steady believer in the Church of England's doctrines. The arguments by which he proved them carried him too far; and when he commenced a teacher of faith, or when, as he expresses it, "his pride struck out new sparkles of its own," at that very time, while in words he maintained the doctrines of his mother-church, his conviction really hovered between natural religion and the faith of

Rome. It is remarkable that his friends do not seem to have considered the "Religio Laici" as expressive of his decided sentiments; for Charles Blount, a noted freethinker, in consequence of that very work, wrote a deistical treatise in prose, bearing the same title, and ascribed it with great testimony of respect to "his much-honoured friend, John Dryden, Esquire." Mr. Blount, living in close habits with Dryden, must have known perfectly well how to understand his polemical poem; and, had he supposed it was written under a deep belief of the truth of the English creed, can it be thought he would have inscribed to the author a tract against all revelation? The inference is, therefore, sufficiently plain, that the dedicator knew that Dryden was sceptical on the subject, on which he had, out of compliment to church and state, affected a conviction; and that his "Religio Laici" no more inferred a belief in the doctrines of Christianity, than the sacrifice of a cock to Æsculapius proved the heathen philosopher's faith in the existence of that divine leech. Thus far Dryden had certainly proceeded. His disposition to believe in Christianity was obvious, but he was bewildered in the maze of doubt in which he was involved; and it was already plain that the church, whose promises to illuminate him were most confident, was likely to have the honour of this distinguished proselyte. Dryden did not, therefore, except in outward profession, abandon the Church of England for that of Rome, but was converted to the Catholic faith from a state of infidelity, or rather of Pyrrhonism. This is made more clear by his own words, from which it appears that, having once admitted the mysterious doctrines of the Trinity and of redemption, so incomprehensible to human reason, Dryden felt no right to make any further appeal to that fallible guide:

> "Good life be now my task; my doubts are done;
> What more could fright my faith than three in one?
> Can I believe Eternal God could lie
> Disguised in mortal mould, and infancy?
> That the great Maker of the world could die?
> And after that trust my imperfect sense,
> Which calls in question his omnipotence?"

From these lines it may be safely inferred, that Dryden's sincere acquiescence in the more abstruse points of Christianity did not long precede his adoption of the Roman faith. In some preceding verses it appears how eagerly he received the conviction of the church's infallibility, as affording that guide, the want of whom he had in some degree lamented in the "Religio Laici:"

> "What weight of ancient witness can prevail,
> If private reason hold the public scale?
> But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
> For erring judgments an unerring guide!
> Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
> A blaze of glory that forbids the sight.

O teach me to believe thee, thus conceal'd,
And search no farther than thyself reveal'd;
But her alone for my director take,
Whom thou hast promised never to forsake!"

We find, therefore, that Dryden's conversion was not of that sordid kind which is the consequence of a strong temporal interest: for he had expressed intelligibly the imagined *desiderata* which the Church of Rome alone pretends to supply, long before that temporal interest had an existence. Neither have we to reproach him that, grounded and rooted in a pure Protestant creed, he was foolish enough to abandon it for the more corrupted doctrines of Rome. He did not unloose from the secure haven to moor in the perilous road, but, being tossed on the billows of uncertainty, he dropped his anchor in the first moorings to which the winds, waves, and perhaps an artful pilot, chanced to convey his bark. We may indeed regret that, having to choose between two religions, he should have adopted that which our education, reason, and even prepossessions, combine to point out as foully corrupted from the primitive simplicity of the Christian church. But neither the Protestant Christian, nor the sceptic philosopher, can claim a right to despise the sophistry which bewildered the judgment of Chillingworth, or the toils which enveloped the active and suspicious minds of Bayle and of Gibbon. The latter, in his account of his own conversion to the Catholic faith, fixes upon the very arguments pleaded by Dryden, as those which appeared to him irresistible. The early traditions of the church, the express words of the text, are referred to by both as the grounds of their conversion; and the works of Bossuet, so frequently referred to by the poet, were the means of influencing the determination of the philosopher. The victorious argument to which Chillingworth himself yielded, was, "that there must be somewhere an infallible judge, and the Church of Rome is the only Christian society, which either does or can pretend to that character."

It is also to be observed, that towards the end of Charles II.'s reign, the High Churchmen and the Catholics regarded themselves as on the same side in political questions, and not greatly divided in their temporal interests. Both were sufferers in the Plot, both were enemies of the sectaries, both were adherents of the Stuarts. Alternate conversion had been common between them, so early as since Milton made a reproach to the English universities of the converts to the Roman faith daily made within their colleges: of those sheep,

"Whom the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace and nothing said."

In approaching Dryden, therefore, a Catholic priest had to combat few of those personal prejudices, which, in other cases, have been impediments to their making converts. The poet had, besides, before him the example of many persons both of rank and talent, who had adopted the Catholic religion.

Such being the disposition of Dryden's mind, and such the peculiar facilities of the Roman churchmen in making proselytes, it is by no means to be denied, that circumstances in the poet's family and situation strongly forwarded his taking such a step. His wife, Lady Elizabeth, had for some time been a Catholic; and though she may be acquitted of any share in influencing his determination, yet her new faith necessarily brought into his family persons both able and disposed to do so. His eldest and best beloved son, Charles, is also said, though upon uncertain authority, to have been a Catholic before his father, and to have contributed to his change.* Above all, James, his master, to whose fortunes he had so closely attached himself, had now become as parsimonious of his favour as his church is of salvation, and restricted it to those of his own sect. It is more than probable, though only a conjecture, that Dryden might be made the subject of those private exhortations, which in that reign were called *closeting*; and, predisposed as he was, he could hardly be supposed capable of resisting the royal eloquence. For, while pointing out circumstances of proof, that Dryden's conversion was not made by manner of bargain and sale, but proceeded upon a sincere though erroneous conviction, it cannot be denied, that his situation as poet-laureate, and his expectations from the king, must have conduced to his taking his final resolution. All I mean to infer from the above statement is, that his interest and internal conviction led him to the same conclusion.

If we are to judge of Dryden's sincerity in his new faith by the determined firmness with which he retained it through good report and bad report, we must allow him to have been a martyr, or at least a confessor, in the Catholic cause. If, after the Revolution, like many greater men, he had changed his principles with the times, he was not a person of such mark as to be selected from all the nation, and punished for former tenets. Supported by the friendship of Rochester, and most of the Tory nobles who were active in the Revolution, of Leicester, and many Whigs, and especially of the Lord Chamberlain Dorset, there would probably have been little difficulty in permitting so eminent an author to remain poet-laureate, if he had recanted the errors of Popery. But the Catholic religion, and the consequent disqualifications, were an insurmountable obstacle to his holding that or any other office under government; and Dryden's adherence to it, with all the poverty, reproach, and even persecution which followed the profession, argued a deep and substantial conviction of the truth of the doctrines it inculcated. So late as 1699, when a union, in opposition to King William, had led the Tories and Whigs to look on each other with some kindness, Dryden thus expresses himself in a letter to his cousin, Mrs. Steward: "The court rather speaks kindly

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* In a libel in the "State Poems," Dryden is made to say—

"One son turn'd me, I turn'd the other two
But had not an indulgence sir, like you.",

of me, than does anything for me, though they promise largely; and perhaps they think I will advance as they go backward, in which they will be much deceived: for I can never go an inch beyond my conscience and my honour. If they will consider me as a man who has done my best to improve the language, and especially the poetry, and will be content with my acquiescence under the present government, and forbearing satire on it, that I can promise, because I can perform it: but I can neither take the oaths, nor forsake my religion; because I know not what church to go to, if I leave the Catholic; they are all so divided amongst themselves in matters of faith necessary to salvation, and yet all assuming the name of Protestants. May God be pleased to open your eyes, as he has opened mine! Truth is but one, and they who have once heard of it, can plead no excuse if they do not embrace it. But these are things too serious for a trifling letter." If, therefore, adherence to the communion of a falling sect, loaded too at the time with heavy disqualifications, and liable to yet more dangerous suspicions, can be allowed as a proof of sincerity, we can hardly question that Dryden was, from the date of his conviction, a serious and sincere Roman Catholic.

The conversion of Dryden did not long remain unrewarded, nor was his pen suffered to be idle in the cause which he had adopted. On the 4th of March, 1685-6, a hundred pounds a year, payable quarterly, was added to his pension;* and probably he found himself more at ease under the regular and economical government of James, than when his support depended on the exhausted exchequer of Charles. Soon after the granting of this boon, he was employed to defend the reasons of conversion to the Catholic faith, alleged by Anne Hyde, Duchess of York, which, together with two papers on a similar subject, said to have been found in Charles II.'s strong box, James had with great rashness given to the public. Stillingfleet, now at the head of the champions of the Protestant faith, published some sharp remarks on these papers. Another hand, probably that of a Jesuit, was employed to vindicate against him the royal grounds of conversion; while to Dryden was committed the charge of defending those alleged by the Duchess. The tone of Dryden's apology was, to say the least, highly injudicious, and adapted to irritate the feelings of the clergy of the established church, already sufficiently exasperated to see the sacrifices which they had made to the royal cause utterly forgotten, the moment that they paused in the extremity of their devotion towards the monarch. The name of "Legion," which the apologist bestows on his adversaries, intimates the committee of the clergy by

* The grant bears this honourable consideration, which I extract from Mr. Malone's work: "Pat. 2. Jac. p. 4. n. 1. Know ye, that we, for and in consideration of the many good and acceptable services done by John Dryden, Master of Arts, to our late dearest brother King Charles the Second, as also to us done and performed, and taking notice of the learning and eminent abilities of the said J. D.," &c.

whom the Protestant cause was then defended; and the tone of his arguments is harsh, contemptuous, and insulting. A raker up of the ashes of princes, a hypocrite, a juggler, a latitudinarian, are the best terms which he affords the advocate of the Church of England, in defence of which he had so lately been himself a distinguished champion. Stillingfleet returned to the charge; and when he came to the part of the defence written by Dryden, he did not spare the personal invective, to which the acrimonious style of the poet-laureate had indeed given an opening. "Zeal," says Stillingfleet, "in a new convert, is a terrible thing, for it not only burns, but rages like the eruptions of Mount Ætna; it fills the air with noise and smoke, and throws out such a torrent of living fire, that there is no standing before it." In another passage, Stillingfleet talks of the "temptation of changing religion for bread;" in another, our author's words, that

"Priests of all religions are the same,"*

are quoted to infer, that he who has no religion may declare for any. Dryden took his revenge both on Stillingfleet the author, and on Burnet, whom he seems to have regarded as the reviser of this answer, in his polemical poem of "The Hind and the Panther."

If we can believe an ancient tradition, this poem was chiefly composed in a country retirement at Rushton, near his birthplace in Huntingdon. There was an embowered walk at this place, which, from the pleasure which the poet took in it, retained the name of Dryden's Walk; and here was erected, about the middle of last century, an urn, with the following inscription: "In memory of Dryden, who frequented these shades, and is here said to have composed his poem of 'The Hind and the Panther.'"

"The Hind and the Panther" was written with a view to obviate the objections of the English clergy and people to the power of dispensing with the Test Laws, usurped by James II. A change of political measures, which took place while the poem was composing, has greatly injured its unity and consistence. In the earlier part of his reign, James endeavoured to gain the Church of England, by fair means and flattery, to submit to the remission which he claimed the liberty of granting to the Catholics. The first part of Dryden's poem is written upon this soothing plan; the Panther, or Church of England, is

"Sure the noblest next the Hind,
And fairest offspring of the spotted kind.
Oh, could her inborn stains be wash'd away,
She were too good to be a beast of prey."

The sects, on the other hand, are characterized, wolves, bears, boars, foxes,—all that is odious and horrible in the brute creation. But ere the poem was published, the king had assumed a different tone with

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* "Absalom and Achitophel."

the Established Church. Relying upon the popularity which the suspension of the penal laws was calculated to procure among the Dissenters, he endeavoured to strengthen his party by making common cause between them and the Catholics, and bidding open defiance to the Church of England. For a short time, and with the most ignorant of the sectaries, this plan seemed to succeed; the pleasure of a triumph over their ancient enemies rendering them blind to the danger of the common Protestant cause. During this interval the poem was concluded; and the last book seems to consider the cause of the Hind and Panther as gone to a final issue, and incapable of any amicable adjustment. The Panther is fairly resigned to her fate.

"Her hour of grace was pass'd,"

and the downfall of the English hierarchy is foretold in that of the Doves, who, in a subaltern allegory, represent the clergy of the Established Church:

"'Tis said, the Doves repented, though too late,
Become the smiths of their own foolish fate:
Nor did their owner hasten their ill hour,
But, sunk in credit, they decreased in power;
Like snows in warmth that mildly pass away,
Dissolving in the silence of decay."

In the preface, as well as in the course of the poem, Dryden frequently alludes to his dispute with Stillingfleet; and perhaps none of his poems contain finer lines than those in which he takes credit for the painful exertion of Christian forbearance, when called by injured feeling to resent personal accusation:

"If joys hereafter must be purchased here
With loss of all that mortals hold so dear,
Then welcome infamy and public shame,
And last, a long farewell to worldly fame!
'Tis said with ease; but, oh, how hardly tried
By haughty souls to human honour tied!
O sharp convulsive pangs of agonizing pride!
Down then, thou rebel, never more to rise!
And what thou didst, and dost, so dearly prize,
That fame, that darling fame, make that thy sacrifice.
'Tis nothing thou hast given; then add thy tears
For a long race of unrepenting years:
'Tis nothing yet, yet all thou hast to give;
Then add those maybe years thou hast to live:
Yet nothing still: then poor and naked come,
Thy father will receive his unthrift home,
And thy blest Saviour's blood discharge the mighty sum."

Stillingfleet is, however, left personally undistinguished, but Burnet, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury, receives chastisement in his stead. The character of this prelate, however unjustly exaggerated, preserves

many striking and curious traits of resemblance to the original; and, as was natural, gave deep offence to the party for whom it was drawn. For not only did Burnet at the time express himself with great asperity of Dryden, but long afterwards, when writing his history, he pronounced a severe censure on the immorality of his plays, so inaccurately expressed as to be applicable, by common construction, to the author's private character. From this coarse and inexplicit accusation, the memory of Dryden was indignantly vindicated by his friend Lord Lansdowne.

It is also worth remarking, that in the allegory of the swallows, introduced in the Third Part of "The Hind and the Panther," the author seems to have had in his eye the proposal made at a grand consult of the Catholics, that they should retire from the general and increasing hatred of all ranks, and either remain quiet at home or settle abroad. This plan, which originated in their despair of James's being able to do anything effectual in their favour, was set aside by the fiery opposition of Father Petre, the martin of the fable told by the Panther to the Hind.

The appearance of "The Hind and the Panther" excited a clamour against the author far more general than the publication of "Absalom and Achitophel." Upon that occasion, the offence was given only to a party; but this open and avowed defence of James's strides towards arbitrary power, with the unpopular circumstance of its coming from a new convert to the royal faith, involved our poet in the general suspicion with which the nation at large now viewed the slightest motions of their infatuated monarch. The most noted amongst those who appeared to oppose the triumphant advocate of the Hind were Montague and Prior, young men now rising into eminence. They joined to produce a parody entitled the "Town and Country Mouse;" part of which Mr. Bayes is supposed to gratify his old friends, Smith and Johnson, by repeating to them. The piece is, therefore, founded upon the twice-told jest of the "Rehearsal." There is nothing new or original in the idea, which chiefly turns upon the ridiculing the poem of Dryden, where religious controversy is made the subject of dispute and adjustment between a Hind and a Panther, who vary between their typical character of animals, and their real character as the Catholic and English church. In this piece, Prior, though the younger man, seems to have had by far the larger share. Lord Peterborough, on being asked whether the satire was not written by Montague in conjunction with Prior, answered—"Yes; as if I, seated in Mr. Cheselden's chaise drawn by his fine horse, should say, '*Lord!* how finely we draw this chaise!'" Indeed, although the parody was trite and obvious, the satirists had the public upon their side; and it now seems astonishing with what acclamations this attack upon the most able champion of James's faith was hailed by his discontented subjects. Dryden was considered as totally overcome by his assailants; they deemed themselves, and were deemed by others as worthy of very

distinguished and weighty recompense;* and what was yet a more decisive proof that their bolt had attained its mark, the aged poet is said to have lamented, even with tears, the usage he had received from two young men, to whom he had been always civil. This last circumstance is probably exaggerated. Montague and Prior had doubtless been frequenters of Will's coffee-house, where Dryden held the supreme rule in criticism, and had thus, among other rising wits, been distinguished by him. That he should have felt their satire is natural, for the arrow flew with the wind, and popularity amply supplied its deficiency in real vigour; but the reader may probably conclude with Johnson, that Dryden was too much hackneyed in political warfare to suffer so deeply from the parody, as Dr. Lockier's anecdote would lead us to believe. "If we can suppose him vexed," says that accurate judge of human nature, "we can hardly deny him sense to conceal his uneasiness."

Although Prior and Montague were first in place and popularity, there wanted not the usual crowd of inferior satirists and poetasters to follow them to the charge. "The Hind and the Panther" was assailed by a variety of pamphlets, by Tom Brown and others. It is worth mentioning, that on this, as on a former occasion, an adversary of Dryden chose to select one of his own poems as a contrast to his latter opinions. The "Religio Laici" was reprinted, and carefully opponed to the various passages of "The Hind and the Panther," which appeared most contradictory to its tenets. But while the Grub Street editor exulted in successfully pointing out the inconsistency between Dryden's earlier and later religious opinions, he was incapable of observing that the change was adopted in consequence of the same unbroken train of reasoning, and that Dryden, when he wrote the "Religio Laici" was under the impulse of the same conviction, which, further prosecuted, led him to acquiesce in the faith of Rome.

The king appears to have been hardly less anxious to promote the dispersion of "The Hind and the Panther," than the Protestant party to ridicule the piece and its author. It was printed about the same time at London and in Edinburgh, where a printing press was maintained in Holyrood House, for the dispersion of tracts favouring the Catholic religion. The poem went rapidly through two or three

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* That Prior was discontented with his share of preferment, appears from the verses entitled "Earl Robert's Mice," and an angry expostulation elsewhere—

> "My friend Charles Montague's preferr'd;
> Nor would I have it long observed,
> That one mouse eats while t'other's starved.

There is a popular tradition, but no farther to be relied on than as showing the importance attached to the "Town and Country Mouse," which says, that Dorset, in presenting Montague to King William, said, "I have brought a *mouse* to wait on your Majesty." "I will make a man of him," said the king; and settled a pension of 500*l.* upon the fortunate satirist.

editions; a circumstance rather to be imputed to the celebrity of the author, and to the anxiety which foes, as well as friends, entertained to learn his sentiments, than to any disposition to acquiesce in his arguments.

But Dryden's efforts in favour of the Catholic cause were not limited to this controversial poem. He is said to have been at first employed by the court, in translating Varillas's "History of Heresies," a work held in considerable estimation by the Catholic divines. Accordingly, an entry to that purpose was made by Tonson in the Stationers' books, of such a translation made by Dryden at his Majesty's command. This circumstance is also mentioned by Burnet, who adds, in very coarse and abusive terms, that the success of his own remarks having destroyed the character of Varillas as a historian, the disappointed translator revenged himself by the severe character of the Buzzard, under which the future Bishop of Sarum is depicted in "The Hind and the Panther." The credulity of Burnet, especially where his vanity was concerned, was unbounded; and there seems room to trace Dryden's attack upon him, rather to some real or supposed concern in the controversy about the Duchess of York's papers, so often alluded to in the poem, than to the commentary on Varillas, which is not once mentioned. Yet it seems certain that Dryden entertained thoughts of translating "The History of Heresies;" and, for whatever reason, laid the task aside. He soon after was engaged in a task, of a kind as unpromising as remote from his poetical studies, and connected, in the same close degree, with the religious views of the unfortunate James II. This was no other than the translation of "The Life of St. Francis Xavier," one of the last adopted saints of the Catholic Church, at least whose merits and supposed miracles were those of a missionary. Xavier is perhaps among the latest also, whose renown for sanctity, and the powers attending it, appears to have been extensive, even while he was yet alive.* Above all, he was of the order of Jesuits, and the very saint to whom Mary of Esté had addressed her vows, in hopes to secure a Catholic successor to the throne of England. It was, therefore, natural enough that Dryden should have employed himself in translating the life of a saint, whose virtues at that time have appeared so peculiarly meritorious; whose praises were so acceptable to his patroness; and whose miracles were wrought for the credit of the Catholic Church, within so late a period. Besides, the work had been composed by Bartoli, in Portuguese; and by Bouhours, in French. With the merits of the latter we are well acquainted; of the former, Dryden speaks highly in the dedication. It may perhaps be more surprising, that the present editor should have retained this translation, than that Dryden should have undertaken it. But surely the only work of this very particular and enthu-

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* In the "Staple of News," act ii. scene 2, Jonson talks of the miracles done by the Jesuits in Japan and China, as current articles of intelligence.

siastic nature which the modern English language has to exhibit, was worthy of preservation, were it but as a curiosity. The creed and the character of Catholic faith are now so much forgotten among us (popularly speaking), that, in reading the "Life of Xavier," the Protestant finds himself in a new and enchanted land. The motives, and the incidents, and the doctrines, are alike new to him, and indeed occasionally form a strange contrast among themselves. There are few who can read, without a sentiment of admiration, the heroic devotion with which, from the highest principle of duty, Xavier exposes himself to hardship, to danger, to death itself, that he may win souls to the Christian faith. The most rigid Protestant, and the most indifferent philosopher, cannot deny to him the courage and patience of a martyr, with the good sense, resolution, ready wit, and address, of the best negotiator that ever went upon a temporal embassy. It is well that our admiration is qualified by narrations so monstrous, as his actually restoring the dead to life; so profane, as the inference concerning the sweating crucifix; so trivial and absurd, as a crab's fishing up Xavier's cross, which had fallen into the sea; and, to conclude, so shocking to humanity, as the account of the saint passing by the house of his ancestors, the abode of his aged mother, on his road to leave Europe for ever, and conceiving he did God good service in denying himself the melancholy consolation of a last farewell. Altogether it forms a curious picture of the human mind, strung to a pitch of enthusiasm, which we can only learn from such narratives: and those to whom this affords no amusement, may glean some curious particulars from the "Life of Xavier," concerning the state of India and Japan, at the time of his mission, as well as of the internal regulations and singular policy adopted by the society of which the saint was a member. Besides the "Life of Xavier," Dryden is said to have translated Bossuet's "Exposition of the Catholic Doctrine;" but for this we have but slight authority.

Dryden's political and polemic discussions naturally interfered at this period with his more general poetical studies. About the period of James's accession, Tonson had indeed published a second Volume of Miscellanies, to which our poet contributed a critical preface, with various translations from Virgil, Lucretius, and Theocritus, and four Odes of Horace; of which the third of the First Book is happily applied to Lord Roscommon, and the twenty-ninth to Lawrence Hyde, Earl of Rochester. Upon these and his other translations Garth has the following striking and forcible observations, though expressed in anguage somewhat quaint:—"I cannot pass by that admirable English poet, without endeavouring to make his country sensible of the obligations they have to his Muse. Whether they consider the flowing grace of his versification, the vigorous sallies of his fancy, or the peculiar delicacy of his periods, they all discover excellences never to be enough admired. If they trace him from the first productions of his youth to the last performances of his age, they will find that as the tyranny of rhyme never imposed on the perspicuity of sense, so a

languid sense never wanted to be set off by the harmony of rhyme. And as his earlier works wanted no maturity, so his latter wanted no force or spirit. The falling off of his hair had no other consequence than to make his laurels be seen the more.

"As a translator, he was just: as an inventor, he was rich. His versions of some parts of Lucretius, Horace, Homer, and Virgil, throughout, gave him a just pretence to that compliment which was made to Monsieur d'Ablancourt, a celebrated French translator. *It is uncertain who have the greatest obligation to him, the dead or the living.*

"With all these wondrous talents he was libelled in his lifetime by the very men who had no other excellences but as they were his imitators. Where he was allowed to have sentiments superior to all others, they charged him with theft. But how did he steal? no otherwise than like those who steal beggars' children, only to clothe them the better."

In this reign Dryden wrote the first Ode to St. Cecilia, for her festival, in 1687. This and the Ode to the Memory of Mrs. Anne Killegrew, a performance much in the manner of Cowley, and which has been admired perhaps fully as much as it merits, were the only pieces of general poetry which he produced between the accession of James and the Revolution. It was, however, about this time that the poet became acquainted with the simple and beautiful hymns of the Catholic ritual, the only pieces of uninspired sacred poetry which are worthy of the purpose to which they are dedicated. It is impossible to hear the "Dies Iræ," or the "Stabat Mater dolorosa," without feeling that the stately simplicity of the language, differing almost as widely from classical poetry as from that of modern nations, awes the congregation, like the architecture of the Gothic cathedrals in which they are chanted. The ornaments which are wanting to these striking effusions of devotion, are precisely such as would diminish their grand and solemn effect; and nothing but the cogent and irresistible propriety of addressing the Divinity in a language understood by the whole worshipping assembly, could have justified the discarding these magnificent hymns from the reformed worship. We must suppose that Dryden, as a poet, was interested in the poetical part of the religion which he had chosen; and his translation of "Veni, Creator Spiritus," which was probably recommended to him as being the favourite hymn of St. Francis Xavier, shows that they did so. But it is less generally known, that the English Catholics have preserved two other translations ascribed to Dryden: one of the "Te Deum," the other of the Hymn for St. John's Eve; which are inserted in the poet's works.

A characteristic of James's administration was rigid economy, not only in ordinary matters, but towards his own partisans; a wretched quality in a prince, who was attempting a great and unpopular revolution both in religion and politics, and ought by his liberality, and even profusion, to have attached the hearts and excited the hopes of

those fiery and unsettled spirits, who are ever foremost in times of national tumult. Dryden, one of his most efficient and zealous supporters, and who had taken the step which of all others was calculated to please James, received only, as we have seen, after the interval of nearly a year from that prince's accession, an addition of 100*l.* to his yearly pension. There may, however, on occasion of "The Hind and the Panther," the Controversy with Stillingfleet, and other works undertaken with an express view to the royal interest, have been private communications of James's favour. But Dryden, always ready to supply with hope the deficiency of present possession, went on his literary course rejoicing. A lively epistle to his friend Etherege, then envoy for James at Ratisbon, shows the lightness and buoyancy of his spirits at this supposed auspicious period.

An event, deemed of the utmost and most beneficial importance to the family of Stuart, but which, according to their usual ill fortune, helped to precipitate their ruin, next called forth the public gratulation of the poet-laureate. This was the birth of that "son of prayers" prophesied in the dedication to Xavier, whom the English, with obstinate incredulity, long chose to consider as an impostor, grafted upon the royal line to the prejudice of the Protestant succession. Dryden's "Britannia Rediviva" hailed, with the enthusiasm of a Catholic and a poet, the very event, which, removing all hope of succession in the course of nature, precipitated the measures of the Prince of Orange, exhausted the patience of the exasperated people, and led them violently to extirpate a hated dynasty, which seemed likely to be protracted by a new reign.

Whatever hopes Dryden may have conceived in consequence of The Hind and the Panther," "Britannia Rediviva," and other works favourable to the cause of James and of his religion, they were suddenly and for ever blighted by the Revolution. It cannot be supposed that the poet viewed without anxiety the crisis while yet at a distance: and perhaps his own tale of the Swallows may have begun to bear, even to the author, the air of a prophecy. He is said, in an obscure libel, to have been among those courtiers who encouraged, by frequent visits, the camp on Hounslow Heath, upon which the king had grounded his hopes of subduing the contumacy of his subjects, and repelling the invasion of the Prince of Orange. If so, he must there have learned how unwilling the troops were to second their monarch in his unpopular and unconstitutional attempts; and must have sadly anticipated the event of a struggle between a king and his whole people. When this memorable catastrophe had taken place, our author found himself at once exposed to all the insult, calumny, and sarcasm, with which a successful party in politics never fail to overwhelm their discomfited adversaries. But what he must have felt yet more severely, the unpopularity of his religion and principles rendered it not merely unsafe, but absolutely impossible, for him to make retaliation. His powers of satire, at such a period, were of no more use to Dryden than a sword to a man who cannot draw it; only serving to render the

pleasure of insulting him the more poignant to his enemies, and the necessity of passive submission more bitter to himself. Of the numerous satires, libels, songs, parodies, and pasquinades which solemnized the downfall of Popery and James, Dryden had not only some exclusively dedicated to his case, but engaged a portion, more or less, of almost every one which appeared. Scarce Father Petre, or the Papal envoy Dada, themselves, were more distinguished by these lampoons than the poet-laureate; the unsparing exertion of whose satirical powers, as well as his unrivalled literary pre-eminence, had excited a strong party against him among the inferior wits, whose political antipathy was aggravated by ancient resentment and literary envy.

Nor was the "pelting of this pitiless storm" of abusive raillery the worst evil to which our author was subjected. The religion which he professed rendered him incapable of holding any office under the new government, even if he could have bended his political principles to take the oaths to William and Mary. We may easily believe, that Dryden's old friend Dorset, now Lord High Chamberlain, felt repugnance to render vacant the places of poet-laureate and royal historiographer, by removing the man in England most capable of filling them; but the sacrifice was inevitable. Dryden's own feelings, on losing the situation of poet-laureate, must have been greatly aggravated by the selection of his despised opponent Shadwell as his successor; a scribbler, whom, in "MacFlecknoe," he had himself placed pre-eminent in the regions of dulness, but who now, so far as royal mandate can arrange such precedence, was raised in his stead as chief among English poets. This very remarkable coincidence has led several of Dryden's biographers, and Dr. Johnson among others, to suppose that the satire was actually written to ridicule Shadwell's elevation to the honours of the laurel; though nothing is more certain than that it was published while Dryden was himself laureate, and could be hardly supposed to anticipate the object of his satire becoming his successor. Shadwell, however, possessed merits with King William, which were probably deemed by that prince of more importance than all the genius of Shakspeare, Milton, and Dryden, if it could have been combined in one individual. He was a staunch Whig, and had suffered under the former government, being "silenced as a non-conforming poet;" the doors of the theatre closed against his plays; and, if he may himself be believed, even his life endangered, not only by the slow process of starving, but some more active proceeding of his powerful enemies. Shadwell, moreover, had not failed to hail the dawn of the Revolution by a congratulatory poem to the Prince of Orange, and to Queen Mary on her arrival. In every point of view, his principles, fidelity, and alacrity, claimed William's countenance; he was presented to him by Dorset, not as the best poet, but as the most honest man, politically speaking, among the competitors; and accordingly succeeded to Dryden's situation as poet-laureate and royal historiographer, with the appointment of 300*l.* a year. Shadwell, as might have been expected, triumphed in his success over his great antagonist; but his

triumph was expressed in strains which showed he was totally unworthy of it.

Dryden, deprived by the Revolution of present possession and future hope, was now reduced to the same, or a worse situation, than he had occupied in the year of the Restoration, his income resting almost entirely upon his literary exertions, his expenses increased by the necessity of providing and educating his family, and the advantage of his high reputation perhaps more than counter-balanced by the popular prejudice against his religion and party. So situated, he patiently and prudently bent to the storm which he could not resist; and though he might privately circulate a few light pieces in favour of the exiled family, as the "Lady's Song," and the translation of Pitcairn's beautiful Epitaph on the Viscount of Dundee, it seems certain that he made no formal attack on the government, either in verse or prose. Those who imputed to him the satires on the Revolution, called "Suum Cuique," and "Tarquin and Tullia," did injustice both to his prudence and his poetry. The last, and probably both satires, were written by Mainwaring, who lived to change his opinions, and become very sorry for what he had done.

The theatre again became Dryden's immediate resource. Indeed, the very first play Queen Mary attended was one of our poet's, which had been prohibited during the reign of James II. But the revival of the "Spanish Friar" could afford but little gratification to the author, whose newly-adopted religion is so severely satirized in the person of father Dominic. Nor was this ill-fated representation doomed to afford more pleasure to the personage by whom it was appointed. For the audience applied the numerous passages concerning the deposing the old king and planting a female usurper on the throne, to the memorable change which had just taken place; and all eyes were fixed upon Queen Mary with an expression which threw her into extreme confusion.

Dryden, after the Revolution, began to lay the foundation for a new structure of fame and popularity in the tragedy of "Don Sebastian." This tragedy, which has been justly regarded as the *chef-d'œuvre* of his plays, was not, he has informed us, "huddled up in haste." The author knew the circumstances in which he stood, while, as he expresses it, his ungenerous enemies were taking advantage of the times to ruin his reputation, and was conscious that the full exertion of his genius was necessary to secure a favourable reception from an audience prepossessed against him and his tenets. Nor did he neglect to smooth the way, by inscribing the piece to the Earl of Leicester, brother of Algernon Sidney, who had borne arms against Charles in the civil war; and yet, Whig or Republican as he was, had taste and feeling enough to patronize the degraded laureate and proscribed Catholic. The dedication turns upon the philosophical and moderate use of political victory, the liberality of considering the friend rather than the cause, the dignity of forgiving and relieving the fallen adversary—themes upon which the eloquence of the suffering party is usually

unbounded, although sometimes forgotten when they come again into power. With all this deprecatory reasoning, Dryden does not recede, or hint at receding, one inch from his principles, but concludes his preface with a resolution to adopt the counsel of the classic:—

"*Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.*"

This tragedy was brought forward in 1690 with great theatrical pomp. But with all these advantages, the first reception of "Don Sebastian" was but cool; nor was it until several retrenchments and alterations had been made, that it rose to the high pitch in public favour which it maintained for many years, and deserved to maintain for ever.

In the same year, "Amphitryon," in which Dryden displays his comic powers to more advantage than anywhere, excepting in the "Spanish Friar," was acted with great applause, calling forth the gratulations even of Milbourne, who afterwards made so violent an attack upon the translation of Virgil. The comedy was inscribed to Sir William Leveson Gower, whose name, well known in the history of the Revolution, may be supposed to have been invoked as a talisman against misconstructions, to which Dryden's situation so peculiarly exposed him, and to which he plainly alludes in the prologue.* Our author's choice of this patron was probably dictated by Sir William Gower's connexion with the Earl of Rochester, whose grand-daughter he had married.

Encouraged by the revival of his popularity, Dryden now ventured to bring forward the opera of "King Arthur," originally designed as an entertainment to Charles II., "Albion and Albanius" being written as a sort of introductory masque upon the occasion. When we consider the strong and even violent political tendency of that prefatory piece, we may readily suppose that the opera was originally written in a strain very different from the present, and that much must have been softened, altered, and erased ere a play, designed to gratulate the

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* "The labouring bee, when his sharp sting is gone,
Forgets his golden work, and turns a drone;
Such is a satire, when you take away
That rage, in which his noble vigour lay.
What gain you by not suffering him to teaze ye?
He neither can offend you now, nor please ye.
The honey-bag and venom lay so near,
That both together you resolved to tear,
And lost your pleasure to secure your fear.
How can he show his manhood, if you bind him
To box, like boys, with one hand tied behind him?
This is plain levelling of wit; in which
The poor has all the advantage, not the rich.
The blockhead stands excused for wanting sense;
And wits turn blockheads in their own defence."

discovery of the Rye House Plot, could, without hazard, be acted after the Revolution. The odious though necessary task of defacing his own labours was sufficiently disgusting to the poet, who complains that "not to offend the present times, nor a government which has hitherto protected me, I have been obliged so much to alter the first design, and take away so many beauties from the writing, that it is now no more what it was formerly, than the present ship of the 'Royal Sovereign,' after so often taking down and altering, is the vessel it was at the first building." Persevering in the prudent system of seeking patrons among those whose patronage was rendered effectual by their influence with the prevailing party, Dryden prefixed to "King Arthur" a beautiful dedication to the Marquis of Halifax, to whose cautious and nice policy he ascribes the nation's escape from the horrors of civil war, which seemed impending in the latter years of Charles II.; and he has not failed, at the same time, to pay a passing tribute to the merits of his original and good-humoured master. The music of "King Arthur" being composed by Purcel, gave Dryden occasion to make that eminent musician some well-deserved compliments, which were probably designed as a peace-offering for the injudicious preference given to Grabut in the introduction to "Albion and Albanius." The dances were composed by Priest, and the whole piece was eminently successful. Its good fortune, however, was imputed by the envious to a lively song in the last act, which had little or nothing to do with the business of the piece. In this opera ended all the hopes which the world might entertain of an epic poem from Dryden on the subject of King Arthur.

Our author was by no means so fortunate in "Cleomenes," his next dramatic effort. The times were something changed since the Revolution. The Tories, who had originally contributed greatly to that event, had repented them of abandoning the Stuart family, and, one after another, were returning to their attachment to James. It is probable that this gave new courage to Dryden, who, although upon the accession of King William he saw himself a member of an odious and proscribed sect, now belonged to a broad political faction, which a variety of events was daily increasing. Hence his former caution was diminished, and the suspicion of his enemies increased in proportion. The choice of the subject, the history of a Spartan prince exiled from his kingdom, and waiting the assistance of a foreign monarch to regain it, corresponded too nearly with that of the unfortunate James. The scene of a popular insurrection, where the minds of a whole people were inflamed, was liable to misinterpretation. In short, the whole story of the Spartan Cleomenes was capable of being wrested to political and Jacobitic purposes, and there wanted not many to aver that to such purposes it had been actually applied by Dryden. Neither was the state of our author such at the time as to permit his pleading his own cause. The completion of the piece having been interrupted by indisposition, was devolved upon his friend Southerne, who revised and concluded the last act. The whispers of the author's enemies in

the meantime procured a prohibition—at least a suspension—of the representation of "Cleomenes" from the Lord Chamberlain. The exertions of Hyde, Earl of Rochester, who, although a Tory, was possessed necessarily of some influence as maternal-uncle to the queen, procured a recall of this award against a play which was in every respect truly inoffensive, but there was still a more insuperable obstacle to its success. The plot is flat and unsatisfactory, involving no great event, and, in truth, being only the question whether Cleomenes should or should not depart upon an expedition which appears far more hazardous than remaining where he was. The grave and stoical character of the hero is more suitable to the French than the English stage; nor had the general conduct of the play that interest, or perhaps bustle, which is necessary to fix the attention of the promiscuous audience of London. In a theatre, where every man may, if he will, express his dissatisfaction, in defiance of *beaux-esprits*, *nobles*, or *mousquetaires*, that which is dull will seldom be long fashionable: "Cleomenes" was accordingly coldly received. Dryden published it with a dedication to Lord Rochester, and the "Life of Cleomenes" prefixed, as translated from Plutarch by Creech, that it might appear how false those reports were which imputed to him the composing a Jacobite play.

Omitting, for the present, Dryden's intermediate employments, I hasten to close his dramatic career by mentioning that "Love Triumphant," his last play, was acted in 1692 with very bad success. Those who look over this piece, which is in truth one of the worst our author ever wrote, can be at no loss to discover sufficient reason for its condemnation. The comic part approaches to farce, and the tragic unites the wild and unnatural changes and counterchanges of the Spanish tragedy, with the involutions of unnatural and incestuous passion, which the British audience has been always averse to admit as a legitimate subject of dramatic pity or terror. But it cannot be supposed that Dryden received the failure with anything like an admission of its justice. He was a veteran foiled in the last of his theatrical trials of skill, and retreated for ever from the stage with expressions which transferred the blame from himself to his judges, for, in the dedication to James, the fourth Earl of Salisbury, a relation of Lady Elizabeth, and connected with the poet by a similarity of religious and political opinions, he declares that the characters of the persons in the drama are truly drawn, the fable not injudiciously contrived, the changes of fortune not unartfully managed, and the catastrophe happily introduced, thus leaving, were the author's opinion to be admitted as decisive, no grounds upon which the critics could ground their opposition. The enemies of Dryden, as usual, triumphed greatly in the fall of this piece, and thus the dramatic career of Dryden began and closed with bad success.

Henceforward we are to consider Dryden as unconnected with the stage.

CHAPTER VII.

State of Dryden's Connexions in Society after the Revolution—Juvenal and Persius—Smaller Pieces—Eleanora—Third Miscellany—Virgil —Ode to St. Cecilia—Dispute with Milbourne—With Blackmore— Fables—The Author's Death and Funeral—His Private Character— Notices of his Family.

THE evil consequences of the Revolution upon Dryden's character and fortunes began to abate sensibly within a year or two after that event. It is well known that King William's popularity was as short-lived as it had been universal. All parties gradually drew off from the king, under their ancient standards. The clergy returned to their maxims of hereditary right, the Tories to their attachment to the house of Stuart, the Whigs to their jealousy of the royal authority. Dryden, we have already observed, so lately left in a small and detested party, was now associated among multitudes, who, from whatever contradictory motives, were joined in opposition to the Government. A reconciliation took place betwixt him and some of his kinsmen, particularly with John Driden, of Chesterton, his first cousin, with whom, from about this period till his death, he lived upon terms of uninterrupted friendship. The influence of Clarendon and Rochester, the queen's uncles, were, we have seen, often exerted in the poet's favour, and through them he became connected with the powerful families with which they were allied. Dorset, by whom he had been deprived of his office, seems to have softened this harsh, though indispensable, exertion of authority by a liberal present, and to his bounty Dryden had frequently recourse in cases of emergency; indeed, upon one occasion it is said to have been administered in a mode savouring more of ostentation than delicacy, for there is a tradition that Dryden and Tom Brown, being invited to dine with the Lord Chamberlain, found under their covers, the one a Bank note for 100*l.*, the other for 50*l.* I have already noticed that these pecuniary benefactions were not held so degrading in that age as at present, and, probably, many of Dryden's opulent and noble friends took, like Dorset, occasional opportunities of supplying wants which neither royal munificence nor the favour of the public now enabled the poet fully to provide for.

If Dryden's critical empire over literature was at any time interrupted by the mischances of his political party it was in *abeyance* for a very short period, since, soon after the Revolution, he appears to have regained, and maintained till his death, that sort of authority in Will's coffee-house to which we have frequently had occasion to allude. His supremacy, indeed, seems to have been so effectually established that a "pinch out of Dryden's snuff-box" was equal to taking a degree in that academy of wit. Among those by whom it was frequented Southerne and Congreve were principally distinguished by Dryden's

friendship. His intimacy with the former, though oddly commenced, seems soon to have ripened into such sincere friendship that the aged poet selected Southerne to finish "Cleomenes," and addressed to him an epistle of condolence on the failure of "The Wives' Excuse," which, as he delicately expresses it, "was with a kind civility dismissed" from the scene. This was indeed an occasion in which even Dryden could tell, from experience, how much the sympathy of friends was necessary to soothe the injured feelings of an author. But Congreve seems to have gained yet further than Southerne upon Dryden's friendship. He was introduced to him by his first play, the celebrated "Old Bachelor," being put into the poet's hands to be revised. Dryden, after making a few alterations to fit it for the stage, returned it to the author with the high and just commendation that it was the best first play he had ever seen. In truth, it was impossible that Dryden could be insensible to the brilliancy of Congreve's comic dialogue, which has never been equalled by any English dramatist, unless by Mr. Sheridan. Less can be said for the tragedies of Southerne, and for "The Mourning Bride." Although these pieces contain many passages of great interest and of beautiful poetry, I know not but they contributed more than even the subsequent homilies of Rowe to chase natural and powerful expression of passion from the English stage, and to sink it into that maudlin and affected and pedantic style of tragedy which haunted the stage till Shakspeare awakened at the call of Garrick. "The Fatal Marriage" of Southerne is an exception to this false taste, for no one who has seen Mrs. Siddons in Isabella can deny Southerne the power of moving the passions till amusement becomes bitter and almost insupportable distress. But these observations are here out of place. Addison paid an early tribute to Dryden's fame by the verses addressed to him on his translations. Among Dryden's less distinguished intimates we observe Sir Henry Shere, Dennis, the critic, Moyle, Motteux, Walsh, who lived to distinguish the youthful merit of Pope, and other men of the second rank in literature. These, as his works testify, he frequently assisted with prefaces, occasional verses, or similar contributions. But among our author's followers and admirers we must not reckon Swift, although related to him,* and now coming into notice.

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* "Dryden, though my near relation," says Swift, "is one whom I have often blamed, as well as pitied." Mr. Malone traces their consanguinity to Swift's grandmother, Elizabeth Dryden, being the daughter of a brother of Sir Erasmus Driden, the poet's grandfather: so that the Dean of St. Patrick's was the son of Dryden's second cousin, which, in Scotland, would even yet be deemed a near relation. The passages in prose and verse, in which Swift reflects on Dryden, are various. He mentions, in his best poem, "The Rhapsody,"

> The Prefaces of Dryden,
> For these our critics must confide in,
> Though merely writ at first for filling,
> To raise the volume's price a shilling.

He introduces Dryden in the "Battle of the Books," with a most irreverent

It is said that Swift had subjected to his cousin's perusal some of those performances which he entitled *Odes*, compositions in which the young author had widely mistaken the nature of his own genius. Even the eye of Dryden was unable to discover the wit and the satirist in the clouds of incomprehensible Pindaric obscurity in which he was enveloped, and the aged bard pronounced the hasty and never-to-be-pardoned sentence: "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet," a doom which he on whom it was passed attempted to repay by repeated, although impotent, attacks upon the fame of Dryden, everywhere scattered through his works. With the exception of Swift, no author of eminence, whose labours are still in request, has ventured to assail the poetical fame of Dryden.

Shortly after the Revolution Dryden had translated several satires of Juvenal, and calling in the aid of his two sons, of Congreve, Creech, Tate, and others, he was enabled, in 1692, to give a complete version both of that satirist and of Persius. In this undertaking he himself bore a large share, translating the whole of Persius, with the first, third, sixth, tenth, and sixteenth satires of Juvenal. To this version is prefixed the noted Essay on Satire, inscribed to the Earl of Dorset and Middlesex. In that treatise our author exhibits a good deal of that sort of learning which was in fashion among the French critics, and, I suspect, was contented rather to borrow something from them than put himself to the trouble of compiling more valuable materials. Such is the disquisition concerning the origin of the word *Satire*, which is chiefly extracted from Casaubon, Dacier, and Rigault. But the poet's own incidental remarks upon the comparative merits of Horace, Juvenal, and Persius, his declamation against the abuse of satire, his incidental notices respecting epic poetry, translation, and English literature in general, render this introduction highly valuable.

Without noticing the short prefaces to Walsh's "Essay upon Woman," a meagre and stiff composition, and to Sir Henry Shere's wretched translation of Polybius, published in 1691 and 1692, we hasten to the elegy on the Countess of Abingdon, entitled "Eleonora." This lady died suddenly, 31st May, 1691, in a ball-room in her own house, just then prepared for an entertainment. The disconsolate husband, who seems to have been a patron of the Muses, not satisfied with the volunteer effusions of some minor poets, employed a mutual friend to engage Dryden to compose a more beautiful tribute to his consort's memory. The poet, it would seem, neither knew the lord nor the lady, but was doubtless propitiated with a proper and satisfactory

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description of his person and arms; and many of the brilliant touches which Swift throws out in the following assumed character of a hack author, are directed expressly against our poet. The malignant allusions to merits, to sufferings, to changes of opinion, to poitical controversies, and a peaceful conscience, cannot be mistaken. The piece was probably composed *flagrante odio*, for it occurs in the Introduction to "The Tale of a Tub," which was written about 1692.

offering upon the mournful occasion, nor was the application and fee judged more extraordinary than that probably offered, on the same occasion, to the divine who was to preach the countess's funeral sermon. The leading and most characteristic features of the lady's character were doubtless pointed out to our author as subjects for illustration, yet so difficult is it, even for the best poet, to feign a sorrow which he feels not, or to describe with appropriate and animated colouring a person whom he has never seen, that Dryden's poem resembles rather an abstract panegyric on an imaginary being than an elegy on a real character. The elegy was published early in 1692.

In 1693 Tonson's "Third Miscellany" made its appearance, with a dedication to Lord Ratcliffe, eldest son of the Earl of Derwentwater, who was himself a pretender to poetry, though our author thought so slightly of his attempts in that way that he does not even deign to make them enter into his panegyric, but contents himself with saying "what you will be hereafter may be more than guessed by what you are at present." It is probable that the rhyming peer was dissatisfied with Dryden's unusual economy of adulation; at least he disappointed some expectations which the poet and bookseller seem to have entertained of his liberality. This dedication indicates that a quarrel was commenced between our author and the critic Rymer. It appears from a passage in a letter to Tonson that Rymer had spoken lightly of him in his last critique (probably in the short view of tragedy), and that the poet took this opportunity, as he himself expresses it, to snarl again. He therefore acquaints us roundly that the corruption of a poet was the generation of a critic; exults a little over the memory of Rymer's "Edgar," a tragedy just reeking from damnation; and hints at the difference which the public is likely to experience between the present royal historiographer and him whose room he occupied. In his epistle to Congreve, alluding to the same circumstance of Rymer's succeeding to the office of historiographer, as Tate did to the laurel, on the death of Thomas Shadwell, in 1692, Dryden has these humorous lines :—

> O that your brows my laurel had sustain'd!
> Well had I been deposed, if you had reign'd:
> The father had descended for the son;
> For only you are lineal to the throne.
> Thus, when the state one Edward did depose,
> A greater Edward in his room arose:
> But now not I, but poetry, is cursed;
> For Tom the second reigns like Tom the first.
> But let them not mistake my patron's part,
> Nor call his charity their own desert.

From the letter to Tonson above referred to it would seem that the dedication of the "Third Miscellany" gave offence to Queen Mary, being understood to reflect upon her government, and that she had

commanded Rymer to return to the charge by a criticism on Dryden's plays, but the breach does not appear to have become wider, and Dryden has elsewhere mentioned Rymer with civility.

The "Third Miscellany" contained, of Dryden's poetry, a few Songs, the First Book, with part of the Ninth and Sixteenth Books of the "Metamorphoses," and the parting of Hector and Andromache, from the "Iliad." It was also to have had the poem of "Hero and Leander," from the Greek, but none such appeared, nor is it clear whether Dryden ever executed the version, or only had it in contemplation. The contribution, though ample, was not satisfactory to old Jacob Tonson, who wrote on the subject a most mercantile expostulatory letter to Dryden, which is fortunately still preserved as a curious specimen of the minutiæ of a literary bargain in the seventeenth century. Tonson, with reference to Dryden having offered a strange bookseller six hundred lines for twenty guineas, enters into a question in the rule of three, by which he discovers, and proves, that for fifty guineas he has only 1446 lines, which he seems to take more unkindly, as he had not *counted* the lines until he had paid the money, from all which Jacob infers that Dryden ought, out of generosity, at least to throw him in something to the bargain, especially as he had used him more kindly in Juvenal, which, saith the said Jacob, is not reckoned so easy to translate as Ovid. What weight was given to this supplication does not appear; probably very little, for the translations were not extended, and as to getting back any part of the copy-money it is not probable Tonson's most sanguine expectations ever reached that point. Perhaps the songs were thrown in as a make-weight. There was a "Fourth Miscellany" published in 1694, but to this Dryden only gave a version of the "Third Georgic" and his Epistle to Sir Godfrey Kneller, the requital of a copy of the portrait of Shakspeare.

In 1693 Dryden addressed the beautiful lines to Congreve on the cold reception of his "Double Dealer." He was himself under a similar cloud from the failure of "Love Triumphant," and therefore in a fit mood to administer consolation to his friend. The epistle contains, among other striking passages, the affecting charge of the care of his posthumous fame, which Congreve did not forget when Dryden was no more.

But, independently of occasional exertions, our author now retired from the stage, had bent his thoughts upon one great literary task, the translation of Virgil. This weighty and important undertaking was probably suggested by the experience of Tonson, the success of whose "Miscellanies" had taught him the value placed by the public on Dryden's translations from the classics. From hints thrown out by contemporary authors there is reason to think that this scheme was meditated even before 1694, but in that year the poet, in a letter to Dennis, speaks of it as under his immediate contemplation. The names of Virgil and of Dryden were talismans powerful to arrest all the literature of England, and fix universal attention upon the progress of

the work. Mr. Malone has recorded the following particulars concerning it, with pious enthusiasm :—

"Dr. Johnson has justly remarked that the nation seemed to consider its honour interested in the event. Mr. Gilbert Dolben gave him the various editions of his author, Dr. Knightly Chetwood furnished him with the Life of Virgil and the Preface to the Pastorals, and Addison supplied the arguments of the several books, and an Essay on the Georgics. The first lines of this great poet which he translated he wrote with a diamond on a pane of glass in one of the windows of Chesterton House, in Huntingdonshire, the residence of his kinsman and namesake, John Driden, Esq.* The version of the first Georgic, and a great part of the last Æneid, was made at Denham Court, in Buckinghamshire, the seat of Sir William Bowyer, Baronet; and the seventh Æneid was translated at Burleigh, the noble mansion of the Earl of Exeter. These circumstances, which must be acknowledged to be of no great importance, I yet have thought it proper to record, because they will for ever endear those places to the votaries of the Muses, and add to them a kind of celebrity which neither the beauties of nature nor the exertions of art can bestow."

Neither was the liberality of the nation entirely disproportioned to the general importance attached to the translation of Virgil by so eminent a poet. The researches of Mr. Malone have ascertained, in some degree, the terms. There were two classes of subscribers, the first set of whom paid five guineas a-piece to adorn the work with engravings, beneath each of which, in due and grateful remembrance, was blazoned the arms of a subscriber; this class amounted to 101 persons, a list of whom presents an assemblage of noble names, few of whom are distinguished more to their credit than by the place they there occupy. The second subscribers were 250 in number, at two guineas each. But from these sums was to be deducted the expense of the engravings, though these were only the plates used for Ogilby's Virgil, a little retouched. Besides the subscriptions, it would seem that Dryden received from Tonson fifty pounds for each Book of the "Georgics" and "Æneid," and probably the same for the "Pastorals" collectively. On the other hand, it is probable that Jacob charged a price for the copies delivered to the subscribers, which, with the expense of the plates, reduced Dryden's profit to about 1200*l.* or 1300*l.*—a trifling sum when compared to what Pope received for the "Iliad," which was certainly between 5000*l.* and 6000*l.*, yet great in proportion to what the age of Dryden had ever afforded, as an encouragement to literature. It must indeed be confessed that the Revolution had given a new impulse and superior importance to literary pursuits. The semi-barbarous age which succeeded the great Civil War had been civilized but by slow degrees. It is true the king and courtiers, among

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* The antiquary may now search in vain for this frail memorial; for the house of Chesterton was, 1807, pulled down for the sake of the materials.

their disorderly and dissolute pleasures, enumerated songs and plays, and, in the course of their political intrigues, held satires in request; but they had neither money nor time to spare for the encouragement or study of any of the higher and more elaborate departments of poetry. Meanwhile, the bulk of the nation neglected verse as what they could not understand, or, with puritanical bigotry, detested as sinful the use, as well as the abuse, of poetical talent. But the lapse of thirty years made a material change in the manners of the English people. Instances began to occur of individuals who, rising at first into notice for their proficiency in the fine arts, were finally promoted for their active and penetrating talents, which necessarily accompany a turn towards them. An outward reformation of manners, at least the general abjuration of grosser profligacy, was also favourable to poetry—

Still first to fly where sensual joys invade.

This was wrought, partly by the religious manners of Mary; partly by the cold and unsocial temper of William, who shunned excess, not perhaps because it was criminal, but because it was derogatory; partly by the political fashion of the day, which was to disown the profligacy that marked the partizans of the Stuarts; but most of all by the general increase of good taste and the improvement of education. All these contributed to the encouragement of Dryden's great undertaking, which promised to rescue Virgil from the degraded version of Ogilby, and present him in a becoming form to a public now prepared to receive him with merited admiration.

While our author was labouring in this great work, and the public were waiting the issue with impatience and attention, a feud, of which it is now impossible to trace the cause, arose between the bard and his publisher. Their union before seems to have been of a nature more friendly than interest alone could have begotten; for Dryden, in one letter, talks with gratitude of Tonson's affording him his company down to Northamptonshire; and this friendly intimacy Jacob neglected not to cultivate, by those occasional compliments of fruit and wine, which are often acknowledged in the course of their correspondence. But a quarrel broke out between them, when the translation of Virgil had advanced so far as the completion of the seventh Æneid; at which period Dryden charges Tonson bitterly with an intention, from the very beginning, to deprive him of all profit by the second subscriptions, alluding, I presume, to the price which the bookseller charged him upon the volumes delivered to the subscribers. The bibliopolist seems to have bent before the storm, and pacified the incensed bard, by verbal submission, though probably without relaxing his exactions and drawbacks in any material degree. Another cause of this dissension appears to have been the Notes upon "Virgil," for which Tonson would allow no additional emolument to the author, although Dryden says, "that to make them good would cost six months' labour at least," and elsewhere tells Tonson ironically, that, since not to be paid

for, they shall be short, "for the saving of paper." I cannot think that we have sustained any great loss by Tonson's penurious economy on this occasion. In his prefaces and dedications, Dryden let his own ideas freely forth to the public; but in his Notes upon the Classics, witness those on "Juvenal" and "Persius," he neither indulged in critical dissertations on particular beauties and defects, nor in general remarks upon the kind of poetry before him; but contented himself with rendering into English the antiquarian dissertations of Dacier and other foreign commentators, with now and then an explanatory paraphrase of an obscure passage. The parodies of Martin Scriblerus had not yet consigned to ridicule the verbal criticism and solemn trifling with which the ancient schoolmen pretended to illustrate the classics. But beside the dispute about the notes in particular, and the various selfish advantages which Dryden suspected Tonson of attempting to secure in the course of the transaction, he seems to have been particularly affronted at a presumptuous plan of that publisher, (a keen Whig, and secretary of the Kit-cat club), to drive him into inscribing the translation of Virgil to King William. With this view, Tonson had an especial care to make the engraver aggravate the nose of Æneas in the plates into a sufficient resemblance of the hooked promontory of the Deliverer's countenance:* and, foreseeing Dryden's repugnance to his favourite plan, he had recourse, it would seem, to more unjustifiable means to further it; for the poet expresses himself as convinced that, through Tonson's means, his correspondence with his sons, then at Rome, was intercepted.† I suppose Jacob, having fairly laid siege to his author's conscience, had no scruple to intercept all foreign supplies, which might have confirmed him in his pertinacity. But Dryden, although thus closely beleaguered, held fast his integrity; and no prospect of personal advantage, or importunity on the part of Tonson, could induce him to take a step inconsistent with his religious and political sentiments. It was probably during the course of these bickerings with his publisher that Dryden, incensed at some refusal of accommodation on the part of Tonson, sent him three well-known

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* This gave rise to a good epigram:

Old Jacob, by deep judgment sway'd,
To please the wise beholders,
Has placed old Nassau's hook-nosed head
On poor Æneas' shoulders.

To make the parallel hold tack,
Methinks there's little lacking;
One took his father pick-a-pack,
And 'tother sent his packing.

† "I am of your opinion," says the poet to his son Charles, "that, by Tonson's means, almost all our letters have miscarried for this last year. But, however, he has missed of his design in the dedication, though he had prepared the book for it; for, in every figure of Æneas, he has caused him to be drawn, like King William, with a hooked nose."—Dryden hints to Tonson himself his suspicion of this unworthy device, desiring him to forward a letter to his son Charles, but not

coarse and forcible satirical lines, descriptive of his personal appearance :—

> With leering looks, bull-faced, and freckled fair,
> With two left legs, and Judas-colour'd hair,
> And frowzy pores, that taint the ambient air.

"Tell the dog," said the poet to the messenger, "that he who wrote these can write more." But Tonson, perfectly satisfied with this single triplet, hastened to comply with the author's request, without requiring any further specimen of his poetical powers. It would seem, on the other hand, that when Dryden neglected his stipulated labour, Tonson possessed powers of animadversion, which, though exercised in plain prose, were not a little dreaded by the poet. Lord Bolingbroke, already a votary of the muses, and admitted to visit their high priest, was wont to relate that one day he heard another person enter the house. "This," said Dryden, "is Tonson; you will take care not to depart before he goes away, for I have not completed the sheet which I promised him, and if you leave me unprotected, I shall suffer all the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt his tongue."*

But whatever occasional subjects of dissension arose between Dryden and his bookseller, mutual interest, the strongest of ties, appears always to have brought them together, after the first ebullition of displeasure had subsided. There might, on such occasions, be room for acknowledging faults on both sides; for if we admit that the bookseller was penurious and churlish, we cannot deny that Dryden seems often to have been abundantly captious and irascible. Indeed, as the poet placed, and justly, more than a mercantile value upon what he sold, the trader, on his part, was necessarily cautious not to afford a price which his returns could not pay; so that while, in one point of view, the author sold at an inadequate price, the purchaser, in another, really got no more than value for his money. That literature is ill recompensed is usually rather the fault of the public than the bookseller, whose trade can only exist by buying that which can be sold to advantage. The trader who purchased the "Paradise Lost" for ten pounds had probably no very good bargain.

However fretted by these teazing and almost humiliating discussions, Dryden continued steadily advancing in his great labour; and about three years after it had been undertaken, the translation of Virgil, "the most noble and spirited," said Pope, "which I know in any language," was given to the public in July, 1697. So eager was the general expectation, that the first edition was exhausted in a few months, and a second published early in the next year. "It satisfied," says Johnson, "his friends, and, for the most part, silenced his enemies."

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by post. "Being satisfied, that Ferrand will do by this as he did by two letters which I sent my sons, about my dedicating to the king, of which they received neither,"

* Johnson's "Life of Dryden."

But although this was generally the case, there wanted not some to exercise the invidious task of criticism, or rather of malevolent detraction. Among those, the highest name is that of Swift; the most distinguished for venomous and persevering malignity, that of Milbourne.

In his Epistle to "Prince Posterity," prefixed to the "Tale of a Tub," Swift, in the character of the dedicator, declares, "upon the word of a sincere man, that there is now actually in being a certain poet called John Dryden, whose translation of Virgil was lately printed in a large folio, well-bound, and, if diligent search were made, for aught I know, is yet to be seen." In his "Battle of the Books" he tells us, "that Dryden, who encountered Virgil, soothed the good ancient by the endearing title of 'father,' and, by a large deduction of genealogies, made it appear that they were nearly related, and humbly proposed an exchange of armour; as a mark of hospitality, Virgil consented, though his was of gold, and cost an hundred beeves, the other's but of rusty iron. However, this glittering armour became the modern still worse than his own. Then they agreed to exchange horses, but, when it came to the trial, Dryden was afraid, and utterly unable to mount." A yet more bitter reproach is levelled by the wit against the poet for his triple dedication of the "Pastorals," "Georgics," and "Æneid" to three several patrons—Clifford, Chesterfield, and Mulgrave. But, though the recollection of the contemned Odes, like the *spretæ injuria formæ* of Juno, still continued to prompt these overflowings of Swift's satire, he had too much taste and perception of poetry to attempt, gravely, to undermine by a formal criticism the merits of Dryden's Virgil.

This was reserved for Luke Milbourne, a clergyman, who, by that assurance, has consigned his name to no very honourable immortality. This person appears to have had a living at Great Yarmouth, which, Dryden hints, he forfeited by writing libels on his parishioners, and from another testimony he seems to have been a person of no very strict morals. Milbourne was once an admirer of our poet, but either poetical rivalry, for he had also thought of translating Virgil himself, or political animosity, for he seems to have held revolution principles, or deep resentment for Dryden's sarcasms against the clergy, or, most probably, all these united, impelled Milbourne to publish a most furious criticism, entitled "Notes on Dryden's Virgil, in a Letter to a Friend." "And here," said he, "in the first place, I must needs own Jacob Tonson's ingenuity to be greater than the translator's, who, in the inscription of his fine gay (title) in the front of the book, calls it very honestly Dryden's Virgil, to let the reader know that this is not that Virgil so much admired in the Augustan age, an author whom Mr. Dryden once thought untranslatable, but a Virgil of another stamp, of a coarser alloy, a silly, impertinent, nonsensical writer, of a various and uncertain style, a mere Alexander Ross, or somebody inferior to him, who could never have been known again in the translation if the name of Virgil had not been bestowed upon him in large characters in the frontispiece, and in the running title. Indeed, there is scarce the

magni nominis umbra to be met with in this translation, which being fairly intimated by Jacob, he needs add no more, but *si populus vult decipi, decipiatur.*"

With an assurance which induced Pope to call him the fairest of critics, not content with criticising the production of Dryden, Milbourne was so ill advised as to produce, and place in opposition to it, a rickety translation of his own, probably the fragments of that which had been suppressed by Dryden's version. A short specimen, both of his criticism and poetry, will convince the reader that the powers of the former were, as has been often the case, neutralized by the insipidity of the latter, for who can rely on the judgment of a critic so ill qualified to illustrate his own precepts? I take the remarks on the tenth Eclogue, as a specimen, at hazard: "This eclogue is translated in a strain too luscious and effeminate for Virgil, who might bemoan his friend, but does it in a noble and a manly style, which Mr. Ogilby answers better than Mr. D., whose paraphrase looks like one of Mrs. Behn's when somebody had turned the original into English prose before.

"Where Virgil says—

Lauri et myricæ flevêre,

the figure's beautiful. Where Mr. D. says—

The laurel stands in tears,
And hung with humid pearls, the lowly shrub appears,

the figure is lost, and a foolish and impertinent representation comes in its place. An ordinary dewy morning might fill the laurels and shrubs with Mr. D.'s tears, though Gallus had not been concerned in it.

And yet the queen of beauty blest his bed—

"Here Mr. D. comes with his ugly patch upon a beautiful face: what had the queen of beauty to do here? . . . Gallus was of quality, but Lycoris's spark a poor inferior fellow; and yet the queen of beauty, &c., would have followed there very well, but not where wanton Mr. D. has fixed her.

Flush'd were his cheeks, and glowing were his eyes.

"This character is fitter for one that is drunk than one in an amazement, and is a thought unbecoming Virgil.

And for thy rival, tempts the raging sea,
The forms of horrid war, and heaven's inclemency.

"Lycoris, doubtless, was a jilting baggage, but why should Mr. D. belie her? Virgil talks nothing of her going to sea, and perhaps she had a mind to be only a camp laundress, which office she might be advanced to without going to sea: the forms of horrid war, for *horrida castra*, is incomparable.

His brows, a country crown
Of fennel, and of nodding lilies drown,

is a very odd figure: Sylvanus had swinging brows to drown such a crown as that, *i.e.*, to make it invisible, to swallow it up; if it be a country crown, drown his brows, it is false English.

The meads are sooner drunk with morning dews.

"*Rivi* signifies no such thing; but then, that bees should be drunk with flowery shrubs, or goats be drunk with browze, for drunk's the verb, is a very quaint thought."

After much more to the same purpose, Milbourne thus introduces his own version of the first Eclogue with a confidence worthy of a better cause: "That Mr. Dryden might be satisfied that I'd offer no foul play, nor find faults in him, without giving him an opportunity of retaliation, I have subjoined another metaphrase or translation of the First and Fourth Pastoral, which I desire may be read with his by the original:—

TITYRUS.

Eclogue I.

Mel. Beneath a spreading beech you, Tityrus, lie,
And country songs to humble reeds apply;
We our sweet fields, our native country fly.
We leave our country; you in shades may lie,
And Amaryllis fair and blithe proclaim,
And make the woods repeat her buxom name.
Tit. O Melibæus! 'twas a bounteous God,
These peaceful play-days on our muse bestow'd;
At least, he'st alway be a God to me;
My lambs shall oft his grateful offerings be.
Thou seest, he lets my herds securely stray,
And me at pleasure on my pipe to play.
Mel. Your peace I don't with looks of envy view,
But I admire your happy state, and you.
In all our farms severe distraction reigns,
No ancient owner there in peace remains.
Sick I, with much ado, my goats can drive,
This, Tityrus, I scarce can lead alive;
On the bare stones, among yon hazels past,
Just now, alas! her hopeful twins she cast.
Yet had not all on's dull and senseless been,
We'd long agon this coming stroke forseen.
Oft did the blasted oaks our fate unfold,
And boding choughs from hollow trees foretold.
But say, good Tityrus! tell me who's the God,
Who peace, so lost to us, on you bestow'd?

Some critics there were, though but few, who joined Milbourne in his abortive attempt to degrade our poet's translation. Oldmixon, celebrated for his share in the games of the Dunciad, and Samuel Parker, a yet more obscure name, have informed us of this by volunteering in Dryden's defence. But Dryden needed not their assistance.

The real excellences of his version were before the public, and it was rather to clear himself from the malignant charges against his moral principles, which Milbourne had mingled with his criticism, than for any other purpose, that the poet deemed his antagonist worthy of the following animadversion:—"Milbourne, who is in orders, pretends, amongst the rest, this quarrel to me, that I have fallen foul on priesthood: if I have I am only to ask pardon of good priests, and am afraid his part of the reparation will come to little. Let him be satisfied that he shall not be able to force himself upon me for an adversary. I contemn him too much to enter into competition with him. His own translations of Virgil have answered his criticisms on mine. If (as they say, he has declared in print) he prefers the version of Ogilby to mine, the world has made him the same compliment, for it is agreed on all hands that he writes even below Ogilby. That, you will say, is not easily to be done, but what cannot Milbourne bring about? I am satisfied, however, that while he and I live together, I shall not be thought the worst poet of the age. It looks as if I had desired him underhand to write so ill against me, but, upon my honest word, I have not bribed him to do me this service, and am wholly guiltless of his pamphlet. It is true I should be glad if I could persuade him to continue his good offices, and write such another critique on anything of mine, for I find, by experience, he has a great stroke with the reader, when he condemns any of my poems, to make the world have a better opinion of them. He has taken some pains with my poetry, but nobody will be persuaded to take the same with his. If I had taken to the church (as he affirms, but which was never in my thoughts) I should have had more sense, if not more grace, than to have turned myself out of my benefice by writing libels on my parishioners. But his account of my manners and my principles are of a piece with his cavils and his poetry, and so I have done with him for ever."*

While Dryden was engaged with his great translation, he found two months' leisure to execute a prose version of "Fresnoy's Art of Painting," to which he added an ingenious Preface, the work of twelve mornings, containing a parallel between that art and poetry; of which Mason has said, that though too superficial to stand the test of strict criticism, yet it will always give pleasure to readers of taste, even when it fails to convince their judgment. This version appeared in 1695. Mr. Malone conjectures that our author was engaged in this task by his friends Closterman, and Sir Godfrey Kneller, artists who had been active in procuring subscriptions for his Virgil. He also wrote a "Life of Lucian," for a translation of his works, by Mr. Walter Moyle, Sir Henry Shere, and other gentlemen of pretension to learning. This version, although it did not appear till after his death, and although he executed no part of the translation, still retains the title of "Dryden's Lucian."

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* Preface to the Fables.

There was one event of political importance which occurred in December, 1695, and which the public seem to have expected should have employed the pen of Dryden;—this was the death of Mary, wife of William the Third. It is difficult to conceive in what manner the poet-laureate of the unfortunate James could have treated the memory of his daughter. Satire was dangerous, and had indeed been renounced by the poet; and panegyric was contrary to the principles for which he was suffering. Yet, among the swarm of rhymers who thrust themselves upon the nation on that mournful occasion, there are few who do not call, with friendly or unfriendly voice, upon our poet to break silence. But the voice of praise and censure was heard in vain, and Dryden's only interference was, in character of the first judge of his time, to award the prize to the Duke of Devonshire, as author of the best poem composed on the occasion of the Queen's death.

Virgil was hardly finished when our author distinguished himself by the immortal Ode to Saint Cecilia, commonly called "Alexander's Feast." There is some difference of evidence concerning the time occupied in this splendid task. He had been solicited to undertake it by the stewards of the Musical Meeting, which had for several years met to celebrate the feast of St. Cecilia, their patroness, and whom he had formerly gratified by a similar performance. In September, 1697, Dryden writes to his son:—"In the mean time, I am writing a song for St. Cecilia's feast; who, you know, is the patroness of music. This is troublesome, and no way beneficial; but I could not deny the stewards, who came in a body to my house to desire that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgeman, whose parents are your mother's friends." This account seems to imply that the Ode was a work of some time; which is countenanced by Dr. Birch's expression, that Dryden himself "observes, in an original letter of his, that he was employed for almost a fortnight in composing and correcting it." On the other hand, the following anecdote is told upon very respectable authority. "Mr. St. John, afterwards Lord Bolingbroke, happening to pay a morning visit to Dryden, whom he always respected, found him in an unusual agitation of spirits, even to a trembling. On inquiring the cause, 'I have been up all night,' replied the old bard: 'my musical friends made me promise to write them an Ode for their feast of St. Cecilia: I have been so struck with the subject which occurred to me, that I could not leave it till I had *completed* it; here it is, *finished* at one sitting.' And immediately he showed him *this* Ode, which places the British lyric poetry above that of any other nation." These accounts are not, however, so contradictory as they may at first sight appear. It is possible that Dryden may have completed, at one sitting, the whole Ode, and yet have employed a fortnight, or much more, in correction. There is strong internal evidence to show that the poem was, speaking with reference to its general structure, wrought off at once. A halt or pause, even of a day, would perhaps have injured that continuous flow of poetical language and description, which argues the whole scene to have arisen at once upon

the author's imagination. It seems possible, more especially in lyrical poetry, to discover where the author has paused for any length of time; for the union of the parts is rarely so perfect as not to show a different strain of thought and feeling. There may be something fanciful, however, in this reasoning, which I therefore abandon to the reader's mercy; only begging him to observe, that we have no mode of estimating the exertions of a quality so capricious as a poetic imagination; so that it is very possible, that the Ode to St. Cecilia may have been the work of twenty-four hours, whilst corrections and emendations, perhaps of no very great consequence, occupied the author as many days. Derrick, in his "Life of Dryden," tells us, upon the authority of Walter Moyle, that the society paid Dryden 40*l.* for this sublime Ode, which, from the passage in his letter above quoted, seems to have been more than the bard expected at commencing his labour. The music for this celebrated poem was originally composed by Jeremiah Clarke, one of the stewards of the festival, whose productions were more remarkable for deep pathos, and delicacy, than for fire and energy. It is probable that, with such a turn of mind and taste, he may have failed in setting the sublime, lofty, and daring flights of the Ode to St. Cecilia. Indeed his composition was not judged worthy of publication. The Ode, after some impertinent alterations, made by Hughes, at the request of Sir Richard Steele, was set to music by Clayton, who, with Steele, managed a public concert in 1711; but neither was this a successful essay to connect the poem with the art it celebrated. At length, in 1736, "Alexander's Feast" was set by Handel, and performed in the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, with the full success which the combined talents of the poet and the musicians seemed to insure. Indeed, although the music was at first less successful, the poetry received, even in the author's time, all the applause which its unrivalled excellence demanded. "I am glad to hear from all hands," says Dryden, in a letter to Tonson, "that my Ode is esteemed the best of all my poetry, by all the town. I thought so myself when I writ it; but, being old, I mistrusted my own judgment." Mr. Malone has preserved a tradition, that the father of Lord Chief Justice Marlay, then a Templar, and frequenter of Will's coffee-house, took an opportunity to pay his court to Dryden, on the publication of "Alexander's Feast;" and, happening to sit next him, congratulated him on having produced the finest and noblest Ode that had ever been written in any language. "You are right, young gentleman (replied Dryden), a nobler Ode never was produced, nor ever will." This singularly strong expression cannot be placed to the score of vanity. It was an inward consciousness of merit, which burst forth, probably almost involuntarily, and I fear must be admitted as prophetic.

The preparation of a new edition of the Virgil, which appeared in 1698, occupied nine days only, after which Dryden began seriously to consider to what he should next address his pen. The state of his circumstances rendered constant literary labour indispensable to the support of his family, although the exertion, and particularly the

confinement, occasioned by his studies, considerably impaired his health. His son Charles had met with an accident at Rome, which was attended with a train of consequences perilous to his health; and Dryden, anxious to recall him to Britain, was obliged to make extraordinary exertions to provide against this additional expense. "If it please God," he writes to Tonson, "that I must die of over-study, I cannot spend my life better than in preserving his." It is affecting to read such a passage in the life of such a man; yet the necessities of the poet, like the afflictions of the virtuous, smooth the road to immortality. While Milton and Dryden were favoured by the rulers of the day, they were involved in the religious and political controversies which raged around them; it is to hours of seclusion, neglect, and even penury, that we owe the Paradise Lost, the Virgil, and the Fables.

Among other projects, Dryden seems to have had thoughts of altering and revising a tragedy called the "Conquest of China by the Tartars," written by his ancient friend and brother-in-law, Sir Robert Howard. The unkindness which had arisen between them upon the subject of blank verse and rhyme, seems to have been long since passed away; and we observe, with pleasure, that Dryden, in the course of the pecuniary transactions about Virgil, reckons upon the assistance of Sir Robert Howard, and consults his taste also in the revisal of the version. But Dryden never altered the "Conquest of China," being first interrupted by the necessity of revising Virgil, and afterwards, perhaps, by a sort of quarrel which took place between him and the players, of whom he speaks most resentfully in his "Epistle to Granville," upon his tragedy of "Heroic Love," acted in the beginning of 1698.

The success of Virgil encouraged Dryden about this time to turn his eyes upon Homer; and the general voice of the literary world called upon him to do the venerable Grecian the same service which the Roman had received from him. It was even believed that he had fixed upon the mode of translation, and that he was, as he elsewhere expresses it, to "fight unarmed, without his rhyme."* A dubious anecdote bears, that he even regretted he had not rendered Virgil into blank verse, and shows at the same time, if genuine, how far he must now have disapproved of his own attempt to turn into rhyme the Paradise Lost. The story is told by the elder Richardson, in his remarks on the tardy progress of Milton's great work in the public opinion.† When Dryden did translate the First Book of Homer,

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* Milbourne, in a note on that passage in the dedication to the Æneid—"*He who can write well in rhyme, may write better in blank verse*," says,—"We shall know that, when we see how much better Dryden's Homer will be than his Virgil."

† "Much the same character he gave of it (*i.e.*, Paradise Lost) to a north-country gentleman, to whom I mentioned the book, he being a great reader, but not in a right train, coming to town seldom, and keeping little company. Dryden amazed him with speaking so loftily of it. 'Why, Mr. Dryden,' says he (Sir W. L.

which he published with the Fables, he rendered it into rhyme; nor have we sufficient ground to believe that he ever seriously intended, in so large a work, to renounce the advantages which he possessed, by his unequalled command of versification. That in other respects the task was consonant to his temper, as well as talents, he has himself informed us. "My thoughts," he says, in a letter to Halifax, in 1699, "are at present fixed on Homer; and by my translation of the first Iliad, I find him a poet more according to my genius than Virgil, and consequently hope I may do him more justice, in his fiery way of writing; which, as it is liable to more faults, so it is capable of more beauties, than the exactness and sobriety of Virgil. Since it is for my country's honour, as well as for my own, that I am willing to undertake this task, I despair not of being encouraged in it by your favour." But this task Dryden was not destined to accomplish, although he had it so much at heart as to speak of resuming it only three months before his death.

In the meanwhile, our author had engaged himself in the composition of those imitations of Boccaccio and Chaucer, which have been since called the "Fables;" and in spring 1699, he was in such forwardness, as to put into Tonson's hands "seven thousand five hundred verses, more or less," as the contract bears, being a partial delivery to account of ten thousand verses, which by that deed he agreed to furnish, for the sum of two hundred and fifty guineas, to be made up three hundred pounds upon publication of the second edition. This second payment Dryden lived not to receive. With the contents of this miscellaneous volume we are to suppose him engaged, from the revisal of the Virgil, in 1697, to the publication of the Fables, in March, 1699-1700. This was the last period of his labours, and of his life; and, like all the others, it did not pass undisturbed by acrimonious criticism, and bitter controversy. The dispute with Milbourne, we noticed, before dismissing the subject of Virgil; but there were two other persons who, in their zeal for morality and religion, chose to disturb the last years of the life of Dryden.

The indelicacy of the stage, being, in its earliest period, merely the coarse gross raillery of a barbarous age, was probably of no greater injury to the morals of the audience, than it is to those of the lower ranks of society, with whom similar language is everywhere admitted as wit and humour. During the reigns of James I. and Charles I. this licence was gradually disappearing. In the domination of the fanatics, which succeeded, matters were so much changed, that, far from permitting the use of indelicate or profane allusions, they wrapped up not only their most common temporal affairs, but even their very crimes and vices, in the language of their spiritual concerns.

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told me the thing himself), 'tis not in rhyme.' 'No [replied Dryden]; *nor would I have done my* Virgil *in rhyme, if I was to begin it again.*"—This conversation is supposed by Mr. Malone to have been held with Sir Wilfred Lawson, of Isell in Cumberland.

Luxury was "using the creature;" avarice was "seeking experiences;" insurrection was "putting the hand to the plough;" actual rebellion, "fighting the good fight;" and regicide, "doing the great work of the Lord." This vocabulary became grievously unfashionable at the Restoration, and was at once swept away by the torrent of irreligion, blasphemy, and indecency, which were at that period deemed necessary to secure conversation against the imputation of disloyalty and fanaticism. The court of Cromwell, if lampoons can be believed, was not much less vicious than that of Charles II., but it was less scandalous; and, as Dryden himself expresses it,

> The sin was of our native growth, 'tis true;
> The scandal of the sin was wholly new.
> Misses there were, but modestly conceal'd,
> Whitehall the naked Goddess first reveal'd;
> Who standing, as at Cyprus, in her shrine,
> The strumpet was adored with rites divine.

This torrent of licentiousness had begun in some degree to abate, even upon the accession of James II. whose manners did not encourage the same general licence as those of Charles. But after the Revolution, when an affectation of profligacy was no longer deemed a necessary attribute of loyalty, and when it began to be thought possible that a man might have some respect for religion without being a republican, or even a fanatic, the licence of the stage was generally esteemed a nuisance. It then happened, as is not uncommon, that those, most bustling and active to correct public abuses, were men whose intentions may, without doing them injury, be estimated more highly than their talents. Thus, Sir Richard Blackmore, a grave physician, residing and practising on the sober side of Temple Bar, was the first who professed to reform the spreading pest of poetical licentiousness, and to correct such men as Dryden, Congreve, and Wycherly. This worthy person, compassionating the state to which poetry was reduced by his contemporaries, who used their wit "in opposition to religion, and to the destruction of virtue and good manners in the world," resolved to rescue the Muses from this unworthy thraldrom, "to restore them to their sweet and chaste mansions, and to engage them in an employment suited to their dignity." With this laudable view he wrote "Prince Arthur, an Epic Poem," published in 1695. The preface contained a furious, though just, diatribe, against the licence of modern comedy, with some personal reflections aimed at Dryden directly. This the poet felt more unkindly, as Sir Richard had, without acknowledgment, availed himself of the hints he had thrown out in the "Essay upon Satire," for the management of an epic poem on the subject of King Arthur. He bore, however, the attack, without resenting it, until he was again assailed by Sir Richard in his "Satire upon Wit," written expressly to correct the dissolute and immoral performances of the writers of his time. With a ponderous attempt at humour, the good knight proposes, that a "bank for wit,"

should be established, and that all which had hitherto passed as current, should be called in, purified in the mint, re-coined, and issued forth anew, freed from alloy.

This satire was published in 1700, as the title-page bears; but Mr. Luttrell marks his copy 23rd November, 1699. It contains more than one attack upon our author. Thus, we are told (wit being previously described as a malady),

> Vanine, that look'd on all the danger past,
> Because he 'scaped so long, is seized at last;
> By p—, by hunger, and by Dryden bit,
> He grins and snarls, and, in his dogged fit,
> Froths at the mouth, a certain sign of wit.

Elsewhere the poet complains, that the universities,

> Debauch'd by Dryden and his crew,
> Turn bawds to vice, and wicked aims pursue.

Again, p. 14,

> Dryden condemn, who taught men how to make,
> Of dunces wits, an angel of a rake.

But the main offence lies in the following passage:

> Set forth your edict; let it be enjoin'd,
> That all defective species be recoin'd;
> St. E—m—t and R—r both are fit
> To oversee the coining of our wit.
> Let these be made the masters of essay,
> They'll every piece of metal touch and weigh,
> And tell which is too light, which has too much allay.
> 'Tis true, that when the coarse and worthless dross
> Is purged away, there will be mighty loss.
> E'en Congreve, Southerne, manly Wycherly,
> When thus refined, will grievous sufferers be.
> Into the melting pot when Dryden comes,
> What horrid stench will rise, what noisome fumes!
> How will he shrink, when all his lewd allay,
> And wicked mixture, shall be purged away?
> When once his boasted heaps are melted down,
> A chestful scarce will yield one sterling crown.
> Those who will D—n's melt, and think to find,
> A goodly mass of bullion left behind,
> Do, as the Hibernian wit, who, as 'tis told,
> Burnt his gilt feather, to collect the gold.
>
> * * * *
>
> But what remains will be so pure, 'twill bear
> The examination of the most severe;
> 'Twill S—r's scales, and Talbot's test abide,
> And with their mark please all the world beside.

These repeated attacks at length call down the vengeance of Dryden, who thus retorted upon him in the preface to the Fables:

"As for the City Bard, or Knight Physician, I hear his quarrel to me is, that I was the author of 'Absalom and Achitophel,' which, he thinks, is a little hard on his fanatic patrons in London.

"But I will deal the more civilly with his two poems, because nothing ill is to be spoken of the dead; and, therefore, peace be to the manes of his 'Arthurs.' I will only say, that it was not for this noble knight that I drew the plan of an epic poem on King Arthur, in my preface to the translation of Juvenal. The guardian angels of kingdoms were machines too ponderous for him to manage; and therefore he rejected them, as Dares did the whirl-bats of Eryx, when they were thrown before him by Entellus: yet from that preface, he plainly took his hint; for he began immediately upon the story, though he had the baseness not to acknowledge his benefactor, but, instead of it, to traduce me in a libel."

Blackmore, who had perhaps thought the praise contained in his two last couplets ought to have allayed Dryden's resentment, finding that they failed in producing this effect, very unhandsomely omitted them in his next edition, and received, as will presently be noticed, another flagellation, in the last verses Dryden ever wrote.

But a more formidable champion than Blackmore had arisen, to scourge the profligacy of the theatre. This was no other than the celebrated Jeremy Collier, a nonjuring clergyman, who published, in 1698, "A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the Stage." His qualities as a reformer are described by Dr. Johnson in language never to be amended. "He was formed for a controvertist; with sufficient learning; with diction vehement and pointed, though often vulgar and incorrect; with unconquerable pertinacity; with wit in the highest degree keen and sarcastic; and with all those powers exalted and invigorated by the just confidence in his cause.

"Thus qualified, and thus incited, he walked out to battle, and assailed at once most of the living writers, from Dryden to Durfey. His onset was violent: those passages, which, while they stood single had passed with little notice; when they were accumulated and exposed together, excited horror. The wise and the pious caught the alarm, and the nation wondered why it had so long suffered irreligion and licentiousness to be openly taught at the public charge."

Notwithstanding the justice of this description, there is a strange mixture of sense and nonsense in Collier's celebrated treatise. Not contented with resting his objections to dramatic immorality upon the substantial grounds of virtue and religion, Jeremy labours to confute the poets of the 17th century, by drawing them into comparison with Plautus and Aristophanes, which is certainly judging of one crooked line by another. Neither does he omit, like his predecessor Prynne, to marshal against the British stage those fulminations directed by the fathers of the church against the Pagan theatres; although Collier could not but know, that it was the performance of the heathen ritual, and not merely the scenic action of the drama, which rendered it sinful for the early Christians to attend the theatre. The book was,

however, of great service to dramatic poetry, which, from that time, was less degraded by licence and indelicacy.

Dryden, it may be believed, had, as his comedies well deserved, a liberal share of the general censure; but, however, he might have felt the smart of Collier's severity, he had the magnanimity to acknowledge its justice. In the preface to the Fables, he makes the *amende honorable*. "I shall say the less of Mr. Collier, because in many things he has taxed me justly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine, which can be truly argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one." To this manly and liberal admission, he has indeed tacked a complaint, that Collier had sometimes, by a strained interpretation, made the evil sense of which he complained; that he had too much "horse-play in his raillery;" and that, "if the zeal for God's house had not eaten him up, it had at least devoured some part of his good manners and civility." Collier seems to have been somewhat pacified by this qualified acknowledgment, and, during the rest of the controversy, turned his arms chiefly against Congreve, who resisted, and spared, comparatively at least, the sullen submission of Dryden.

While these controversies were raging, Dryden's time was occupied with the translations or imitations of Chaucer and Boccaccio. Among these, the "Character of the Good Parson" is introduced, probably to confute Milbourne, Blackmore, and Collier, who had severally charged our author with the wilful and premeditated contumely thrown upon the clergy in many passages of his satirical writings. This too seems to have inflamed the hatred of Swift, who, with all his levities, was strictly attached to his order, and keenly jealous of its honours. Dryden himself seems to have been conscious of his propensity to assail churchmen. "I remember," he writes to his sons, "the counsel you gave me in your letter; but dissembling, although lawful in some cases, is not my talent; yet, for your sake, I will struggle with the plain openness of my nature, and keep in my just resentments against that degenerate order." Milbourne, and other enemies of our author, imputed this resentment against the clergy, to his being refused orders when he wished to take them, in the reign of Charles, with a view to the Provostship of Eton, or some Irish preferment. But Dryden assures us, that he never had any thoughts of entering the church. Indeed, his original offences of this kind may be safely ascribed to the fashionable practice after the Restoration, of laughing at all that was accounted serious before that period. And when Dryden became a convert to the Catholic faith, he was, we have seen, involved in an immediate and furious controversy with the clergy of the Church of England. Thus, an unbeseeming strain of raillery, adopted in wantonness, became aggravated, by controversy, into real dislike and

animosity. But Dryden, in the "Character of a Good Parson," seems determined to show, that he could estimate the virtue of the clerical order. He undertook the task at the instigation of Mr. Pepys, the founder of the library in Magdalen College, which bears his name; and has accomplished it with equal spirit and elegance; not forgetting, however, to make his pattern of clerical merit of his own jacobitical principles.

Another very pleasing performance which entered the Miscellany called "The Fables," is the epistle to John Driden of Chesterton, the poet's cousin. The letters to Mrs. Stewart show the friendly intimacy in which the relations had lived, since the opposition of the Whigs to King William's government in some degree united that party in conduct, though not in motive, with the favourers of King James. Yet our author's strain of politics, as at first expressed in the epistle, was too severe for his cousin's digestion. Some reflection upon the Dutch allies, and their behaviour in the war, were omitted, as tending to reflect upon King William; and the whole piece, to avoid the least chance of giving offence, was subjected to the revision of Montague, with a deprecation of his displeasure, an entreaty of his patronage, and the humiliating offer, that, although repeated correction had already purged the spirit out of the poem, nothing should stand in it relating to public affairs, without Mr. Montague's permission. What answer "full-blown Bufo" returned to Dryden's petition, does not appear; but the author's opposition principles were so deeply woven in with the piece, that they could not be obliterated without tearing it to pieces. His model of an English member of Parliament votes in opposition, as his Good Parson is a nonjuror, and the Fox in the fable of Old Chaucer is translated into a puritan.* The epistle was highly acceptable to Mr. Driden, of Chesterton, who acknowledged the immortality conferred on him, by "a noble present," which family tradition states to have amounted to 500*l*.† Neither did Dryden

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* There was, to be sure, in the provoking scruples of that rigid sect, something peculiarly tempting to a satirist. How is it possible to forgive Baxter, for the affectation with which he records the enormities of his childhood?

"Though my conscience," says he, "would trouble me when I sinned, yet divers sins I was addicted to, and oft committed against my conscience, which, for the warning of others, I will here confess to my shame. I was much addicted to the *excessive gluttonous eating of apples and pears*, which I think laid the foundation of the imbecility and flatulency of my stomach, which caused the bodily calamities of my life. To this end, and to concur with naughty boys that gloried in evil, I have oft gone into other men's orchards, and stolen the fruit, when I had enough at home." There are six other retractations of similar enormities, when he concludes:—"These were my sins in my childhood, as to which, conscience troubled me for a great while before they were overcome." Baxter was a pious and worthy man; but can anyone read this confession without thinking of Tartuffe, who subjected himself to penance for killing a flea with too much anger?

† Mr. Malone thinks tradition has confounded a present made to the poet himself, probably of 100*l*. with a legacy bequeathed to his son Charles, which last did amount to 500*l*., but which Charles lived not to receive.

neglect so fair an opportunity to avenge himself on his personal, as well as his political adversaries. Milbourne and Blackmore receive in the epistle severe chastisement for their assaults upon his poetry and private character:

> What help from art's endeavours can we have?
> Guibbons but guesses, nor is sure to save;
> But Maurus sweeps whole parishes and peoples every grave;
> And no more mercy to mankind will use,
> Than when he robb'd and murder'd Maro's muse.
> Would'st thou be soon despatch'd, and perish whole,
> Trust Maurus with thy life, and Milbourne with thy soul.

Referring to another place, what occurs upon the style and execution of the Fables, I have only to add, that they were published early in spring 1700, in a large folio, and with the "Ode to Saint Cecilia." The epistle to Driden of Chesterton, and a translation of the first Iliad, must have more than satisfied the mercantile calculations of Tonson, since they contained seventeen hundred verses above the quantity which Dryden had contracted to deliver. In the preface, the author vindicates himself with great spirit against his literary adversaries; makes his usual strong and forcible remarks on the genius of the authors whom he had imitated: and, in this his last critical work, shows all the acumen which had so long distinguished his powers. The Fables were dedicated to the last Duke of Ormond, the grandson of the Barzillai of "Absalom and Achitophel," and the son of the heroic Earl of Ossory; friends both, and patrons of Dryden's earlier essays. There is something affecting in a connexion so honourably maintained; and the sentiment, as touched by Dryden, is simply pathetic. "I am not vain enough to boast, that I have deserved the value of so illustrious a line: but my fortune is the greater, that for three descents they have been pleased to distinguish my poems from those of other men; and have accordingly made me their peculiar care. May it be permitted me to say, that as your grandfather and father were cherished and adored with honours by two successive monarchs, so I have been esteemed and patronized by the grandfather, the father, and the son, descended from one of the most ancient, most conspicuous, and most deserving families in Europe."

There were also prefixed to the "Fables," those introductory verses addressed to the beautiful Duchess of Ormond, which have all the easy, felicitous, and sprightly gallantry, demanded on such occasions. The incense, it is said, was acknowledged by a present of 500*l.*; a donation worthy of the splendid house of Ormond. The sale of the "Fables," was surprisingly slow: even the death of the author, which has often sped away a lingering impression, does not seem to have increased the demand: and the second edition was not printed till 1713, when Dryden and all his immediate descendants being no more, the sum stipulated upon that event was paid by Tonson to Lady Sylvius, daughter of one of Lady Elizabeth Dryden's brothers, for the benefit of his widow, then in a state of lunacy.

The end of Dryden's labours was now fast approaching; and as his career began upon the stage, it was in some degree doomed to terminate there. It is true, he never recalled his resolution to write no more plays; but Vanbrugh having about this time revised and altered for the Drury Lane theatre, Fletcher's lively comedy of "The Pilgrim," it was agreed that Dryden, or, as one account says, his son Charles,* should have the profits of a third night, on condition of adding to the piece a Secular Masque, adapted to the supposed termination of the seventeenth century:† a Dialogue in the Madhouse between two Distracted Lovers; and a Prologue and Epilogue. The Secular Masque contains a beautiful and spirited delineation of the reigns of James I. Charles I. and Charles II., in which the influence of Diana, Mars, and Venus, are supposed to have respectively predominated. Our author did not venture to assign a patron to the last years of the century, though the expulsion of Saturn might have given a hint for it. The music of the Masque is said to have been good; at least it is admired by the eccentric author of John Buncle. The Prologue and Epilogue to "The Pilgrim," were written within twenty days of Dryden's death; and their spirit equals that of any of his satirical compositions. They afford us the less pleasing conviction, that even the last fortnight of Dryden's life was occupied in repelling or retorting the venomed attacks of his literary foes. In the Prologue, he gives Blackmore a drubbing which would have annihilated any author of ordinary modesty; but the knight was as remarkable for his powers of endurance, as some modern pugilists are said to be for the quality technically called *bottom*. After having been "brayed in a mortar," as Solomon expresses it, by every wit of his time, Sir Richard not only survived to commit new offences against ink and paper, but had his faction, his admirers, and his panegyrists, among that numerous and sober class of readers, who think that genius consists in good intention. In the Epilogue, Dryden attacks Collier, but with more courteous weapons: it is rather a palliation than a defence of dramatic immorality, and contains nothing personally offensive to Collier.—Thus so dearly was Dryden's pre-eminent reputation purchased, that even his last hours were embittered with controversy; and nature, over-watched and worn out, was, like a besieged garrison, forced to obey the call to arms, and defend reputation even with the very last exertion of the vital spirit.

The approach of death was not, however, so gradual as might have

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* Gildon, in his "Comparison between the Stages."—"Nay then," says the whole party at Drury Lane, "we'll even put 'The Pilgrim' upon him." "Ay, 'faith, so we will," says Dryden: "and if you let my son have the profits of the third night, I'll give you a Secular Masque." "Done," says the House; "and so the bargain was struck."

† *i.e.* Upon the 25th March, 1700; it being supposed (as by many in our own time) that the century was concluded so soon as the hundredth year commenced —as if a play was ended at the *beginning of the fifth act.*

been expected from the poet's chronic diseases. He had long suffered both by the gout and gravel, and more lately the erysipelas seized one of his legs. To a shattered frame and a corpulent habit, the most trifling accident is often fatal. A slight inflammation in one of his toes, became, from neglect, a gangrene. Mr. Hobbes, an eminent surgeon, to prevent mortification, proposed to amputate the limb; but Dryden, who had no reason to be in love with life, refused the chance of prolonging it by a doubtful and painful operation. After a short interval, the catastrophe expected by Mr. Hobbes took place, and Dryden, not long surviving the consequences, left life on Wednesday morning, 1st May, 1700, at three o'clock. He seems to have been sensible till nearly his last moments, and died in the Roman Catholic faith, with submission and entire resignation to the divine will; "taking leave of his friends," says Mrs. Creed, one of the sorrowful number, "so tender and obliging a farewell, as none but he himself could have expressed."

The death of a man like Dryden, especially in narrow and neglected circumstances, is usually an alarum-bell to the public. Unavailing and mutual reproaches, for unthankful and pitiless negligence, waste themselves in newspaper paragraphs, elegies, and funeral processions; the debt to genius is then deemed discharged, and a new account of neglect and commemoration is opened between the public and the next who rises to supply his room. It was thus with Dryden: His family were preparing to bury him with the decency becoming their limited circumstances, when Charles Montague, Lord Jefferies, and other men of quality, made a subscription for a public funeral. The body of the poet was then removed to Physicians' Hall, where it was embalmed, and lay in state till the 13th day of May, twelve days after the decease. On that day, the celebrated Dr. Garth pronounced a Latin oration over the remains of his departed friend; which were then, with considerable state, preceded by a band of music, and attended by a numerous procession of carriages, transported to Westminster Abbey, and deposited between the graves of Chaucer and Cowley.

The malice of Dryden's contemporaries, which he had experienced through life, attempted to turn into burlesque these funeral honours. Farquhar, the comic dramatist, wrote a letter containing a ludicrous account of the funeral;* in which, as Mr. Malone most justly remarks,

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* "I come now from Mr. Dryden's funeral, where we had an Ode in Horace sung, instead of David's Psalms; whence you may find, that we don't think a poet worth Christian burial. The pomp of the ceremony was a kind of rhapsody, and fitter I think, for Hudibras, than him; because the cavalcade was mostly burlesque: but he was an extraordinary man, and buried after an extraordinary fashion; for I do believe there was never such another burial seen. The oration, indeed, was great and ingenious, worthy the subject, and like the author; whose prescriptions can restore the living, and his pen embalm the dead. And so much for Mr. Dryden; whose burial was the same as his life,—variety, and not of a piece:—the quality and mob, farce and heroics; the sublime and ridicule mixed in a piece;—great Cleopatra in a hackney coach."

he only sought to amuse his fair correspondent by an assemblage of ludicrous and antithetical expressions and ideas, which, when accurately examined, express little more than the bustle and confusion which attends every funeral procession of uncommon splendour. Upon this ground-work, Mrs. Thomas (the Corinna of Pope and Cromwell) raised, at the distance of thirty years, the marvellous structure of fable, which has been copied by all Dryden's biographers, till the industry of Mr. Malone has sent it, with other figments of the same lady, to "the grave of all the Capulets."* She appears to have been something assisted by a burlesque account of the funeral, imputed by Mr. Malone to Tom Brown, who certainly continued to insult Dryden's memory whenever an opportunity offered. Indeed, Mrs. Thomas herself quotes this last respectable authority. It must be a well-conducted and uncommon public ceremony, where the philosopher can find nothing to condemn, nor the satirist to ridicule: yet, to our imagination, what can be more striking, than the procession of talent and rank, which escorted the remains of DRYDEN to the tomb of CHAUCER!

The private character of the individual, his personal appearance, and rank in society, are the circumstances which generally interest the public most immediately upon his decease.

We are enabled, from the various paintings and engravings of Dryden, as well as from the less flattering delineations of the satirists of his time, to form a tolerable idea of his face and person. In youth, he appears to have been handsome, and of a pleasing countenance; when his age was more advanced, he was corpulent and florid, which procured him the nickname attached to him by Rochester.† In his latter days, distress and disappointment probably chilled the fire of his eye, and the advance of age destroyed the animation of his countenance.‡ Still, however, his portraits bespeak the look and features of genius: especially that in which he is drawn with his waving grey hairs.

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* For a full account of this extraordinary story, see also Johnson's "Lives of Eminent English Poets."—*Chandos Edition*, p. 153. He calls it "a wild story." This memorable romance was first published in "Wilson's Life of Congreve," 1730. Mr. Malone has successfully shown, that it is false in almost all its parts; for, independently of the extreme improbability of the whole story, it is clear, from Ward's account, written at the time, that Lord Jefferies, who it is pretended interrupted the funeral, did, in fact, largely contribute to it. This also appears from a paragraph, in a letter from Doctor, afterwards Bishop Tanner, dated May 6th, 1700, and thus given by Mr. Malone:—"Mr. Dryden died a papist, if at all a Christian. Mr. Montague had given orders to bury him; but some lords (my Lord Dorset, Jefferies, &c.) thinking it would not be splendid enough, ordered him to be carried to Russel's: there he was embalmed; and now lies in state at the Physician's College, and is to be buried with Chaucer, Cowley, &c., at Westminster Abbey, on Monday next." *MSS. Ballard. in Bibl. Bodl.*

† "Poet Squab."

‡ From "Epigrams on the Paintings of the most eminent Masters," by J. E. (John Elsum), Esq. 8vo. 1700, Mr. Malone gives the following lines:

In disposition and moral character, Dryden is represented as most amiable, by all who had access to know him; and his works, as well as letters, bear evidence to the justice of their panegyric. Congreve's character of the poet was drawn doubtless favourably, yet it contains points which demonstrate its fidelity.

"Whoever shall censure me, I dare be confident you, my lord, will excuse me for anything that I shall say with due regard to a gentleman, for whose person I had as just an affection as I have an admiration of his writings. And indeed Mr. Dryden had personal qualities to challenge both love and esteem from all who were truly acquainted with him.

"He was of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate; easily forgiving injuries, and capable of a prompt and sincere reconciliation with them who had offended him.

"Such a temperament is the only solid foundation of all moral virtues and social endowments. His friendship, where he professed it, went much beyond his professions; and I have been told of strong and generous instances of it by the persons themselves who received them, though his hereditary income was little more than a bare competency.

"As his reading had been very extensive, so was he very happy in a memory, tenacious of everything that he had read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than he was communicative of it. But then his communication of it was by no means pedantic, or imposed upon the conversation; but just such, and went so far, as, by the natural turns of the discourse in which he was engaged, it was necessarily promoted or required. He was extreme ready and gentle in his correction of the errors of any writer, who thought fit to consult him; and full as ready and patient to admit of the reprehension of others, in respect of his own oversight or mistakes. He was of very easy, I may say, of very pleasing access; but something slow, and, as it were, diffident in his advances to others. He had something in his nature, that abhorred intrusion into any society whatsoever. Indeed, it is to be regretted, that he was rather blameable in the other extreme; for, by that means, he was personally less known, and, consequently, his

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THE EFFIGIES OF MR. DRYDEN, BY CLOSTERMAN,

Epig. clxiv.

"A sleepy eye he shows, and no sweet feature,
Yet was indeed a favourite of nature:
Endow'd and graced with an exalted mind,
With store of wit, and that of every kind.
Juvenal's tartness, Horace's sweet air,
With Virgil's force, in him concenter'd were.
But though the painter's art can never show it,
That his exemplar was so great a poet,
Yet are the lines and tints so subtly wrought,
You may perceive he was a man of thought.
Closterman, 'tis confess'd, has drawn him well,
But short of Absalom and Achitophel."

character might become liable both to misapprehensions and misrepresentations.

"To the best of my knowledge and observation, he was, of all the men that ever I knew, one of the most modest, and the most easily to be discountenanced in his approaches either to his superiors or his equals."

This portrait is from the pen of friendship; yet, if we consider all the circumstances of Dryden's life, we cannot deem it much exaggerated. For about forty years, his character, personal and literary, was the object of assault by every subaltern scribbler, titled or untitled, laureated or pilloried. "My morals," he himself has said, "have been sufficiently aspersed; that only sort of reputation, which ought to be dear to every honest man, and is to me." In such an assault, no weapon would remain unhandled, no charge, true or false, unpreferred, providing it was but plausible. Such qualities, therefore, as we do not, in such circumstances, find excepted against, must surely be admitted to pass to the credit of Dryden. His change of political opinion, from the time he entered life under the protection of a favourite of Cromwell, might have argued instability, if he had changed a second time, when the current of power and popular opinion set against the doctrines of the Reformation. As it is, we must hold Dryden to have acted from conviction, since personal interest, had that been the ruling motive of his political conduct, would have operated as strongly in 1688 as in 1660. The change of his religion we have elsewhere discussed; and endeavoured to show, that, although Dryden was unfortunate in adopting the more corrupted form of our religion, yet considered relatively, it was a fortunate and laudable conviction which led him from the mazes of scepticism to become a Catholic of the communion of Rome. It would be vain to maintain, that in his early career he was free from the follies and vices of a dissolute period; but the absence of every positive charge, and the silence of numerous accusers, may be admitted to prove, that he partook in them more from general example than inclination, and with a moderate, rather than voracious or undistinguishing appetite. It must be admitted, that he sacrificed to the Belial or Asmodeus of the age, in his writings; and that he formed his taste upon the licentious and gay society with which he mingled. But we have the testimony of one who knew him well, that, however loose his comedies, the temper of the author was modest;* his indelicacy was like the forced impudence of a bashful man; and Rochester has accordingly upbraided him, that his licentiousness was neither natural nor seductive. Dryden had unfortu-

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* A correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in 1745, already quoted, says of him as a personal acquaintance: "Posterity is absolutely mistaken as to that great man: though forced to be a satirist, he was the mildest creature breathing, and the readiest to help the young and deserving. Though his comedies are horribly full of *double entendre*, yet 'twas owing to a false complaisance. He was in company, the modestest man that ever conversed."

nately conformed enough to the taste of his age, to attempt that "nice mode of wit," as it is termed by the said noble author, whose name has become inseparably connected with it; but it sate awkwardly upon his natural modesty, and in general sounds impertinent, as well as disgusting. The clumsy phraseology of Burnet, in passing censure on the immorality of the stage, after the Restoration, terms "Dryden, the greatest master of dramatic poesy, a monster of immodesty and of impurity of all sorts." The expression called forth the animated defence of Granville, Lord Lansdowne, our author's noble friend. "All who knew him," said Lansdowne, "can testify this was not his character. He was so much a stranger to immodesty, that modesty in too great a degree was his failing: he hurt his fortune by it, he complained of it, and never could overcome it. He was," adds he, "esteemed, courted, and admired, by all the great men of the age in which he lived, who would certainly not have received into friendship a monster, abandoned to all sorts of vice and impurity. His writings will do immortal honour to his name and country, and his poems last as long, if I may have leave to say it, as the Bishop's sermons, supposing them to be equally excellent in their kind."

The Bishop's youngest son, Thomas Burnet, in replying to Lord Lansdowne, explained his father's last expressions as limited to Dryden's plays, and showed, by doing so, that there was no foundation for fixing this gross and dubious charge upon his private moral character.

Dryden's conduct as a father, husband, and master of a family, seems to have been affectionate, faithful, and, so far as his circumstances admitted, liberal and benevolent. The whole tenor of his correspondence bears witness to his paternal feelings; and even when he was obliged to have recourse to Tonson's immediate assistance to pay for the presents he sent them, his affection vented itself in that manner. As a husband, if Lady Elizabeth's peculiarities of temper precluded the idea of a warm attachment, he is not upbraided with neglect or infidelity by any of his thousand assailants. As a landlord, Mr. Malone has informed us, on the authority of Lady Dryden, that "his little estate at Blakesley is at this day occupied by one Harriots, grandson of the tenant who held it in Dryden's time: and he relates, that his grandfather was used to take great pleasure in talking of our poet. He was, he said, the easiest and the kindest landlord in the world, and never raised the rent during the whole time he possessed the estate."

Some circumstances, however, may seem to degrade so amiable a private, so sublime a poetical character. The licence of his comedy, as we have seen, had for it only the apology of universal example, and must be lamented, though not excused. Let us, however, remember, that if in the hey-day of the merry monarch's reign, Dryden ventured to maintain, that, the prime end of poetry being pleasure, the muses ought not to be fettered by the chains of strict decorum; yet in his more advanced and sober mood he evinced sincere repentance for his

trespass, by patient and unresisting submission to the coarse and rigorous chastisement of Collier. If it is alleged, that, in the fury of his loyal satire, he was not always solicitous concerning its justice, let us make allowance for the prejudice of party, and consider at what advantage, after the lapse of more than a century, and through the medium of impartial history, we now view characters, who were only known to their contemporaries as zealous partizans of an opposite and detested faction. The moderation of Dryden's reprisals, when provoked by the grossest calumny and personal insult, ought also to plead in his favour. Of the hundreds who thus assailed, not only his literary, but his moral reputation, he has distinguished Settle and Shadwell alone by an elaborate retort. Those who look into Mr. Luttrel's collections,* will at once see the extent of Dryden's sufferance, and the limited degree of his retaliation.

The extreme flattery of Dryden's dedications have been objected to him, as a fault of an opposite description; and perhaps no writer has equalled him in the profusion and elegance of his adulation. "Of this kind of meanness," says Johnson, "he never seems to decline the practice, or lament the necessity. He considers the great as entitled to encomiastic homage, and brings praise rather as a tribute than a gift; more delighted with the fertility of his invention, than mortified by the prostitution of his judgment." It may be noticed, in palliation of this heavy charge, that the form of address to superiors must be judged of by the manners of the times; and that the adulation contained in dedications was then as much a matter of course, as the words of submissive style which still precede the subscription of an ordinary letter. It is probable, that Dryden considered his panegyrics as merely conforming with the fashion of the day, and rendering unto Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's,—attended with no more degradation than the payment of any other tribute to the forms of politeness and usage of the world.

Of Dryden's general habits of life we can form a distinct idea, from the evidence assembled by Mr. Malone. His mornings were spent in study; he dined with his family, probably about two o'clock. After dinner he went usually to Will's Coffeehouse, the famous rendezvous of the wits of the time, where he had his established chair by the chimney in winter, and near the balcony in summer, whence he pronounced *ex cathedra*, his opinion upon new publications, and, in general, upon all matters of dubious criticism.† Latterly, all who had occasion to ridicule or attack him, represent him as presiding in this little senate.

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* Narcissus Luttrel, Esq., made a collection of every poetical tract hawked through the sheets in his time. This collection contains all or nearly all the satires on Dryden. *See* Scott's Advertisement to his Edition of Dryden. This collection contained fugitive pieces from the reign of Charles the Second to Queen Anne.—[EDIT.]

† It seems that the original sign of Will's Coffeehouse had been a *cow*. It was changed, however, to a *rose*, in Dryden's time. This wits' coffeehouse was situated at the end of Bow Street, on the north side of Russel Street, and frequented by all

His opinions, however, were not maintained with dogmatism; and we have an instance, in a pleasing anecdote told by Dr. Lockier,* that Dryden readily listened to criticism, provided it was just, from whatever unexpected and undignified quarter it happened to come. In general, however, it may be supposed, that few ventured to dispute his opinion, or place themselves in the gap between him and the object of his censure. He was most falsely accused of carrying literary jealousy to such a length, as feloniously to encourage Creech to venture on a translation of Horace, that he might lose the character he had gained by a version of Lucretius. But this is positively contradicted, upon the authority of Southerne.†

We have so often stopped in our narrative of Dryden's life, to notice the respectability of his general society, that little need here be said on

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who made any pretence to literature, or criticism. Their company, it would seem, was attended with more honour than profit; for Dennis describes William Erwin, or Urwin, who kept the house, as taking refuge in Whitefriars, then a place of asylum, to escape the clutches of his creditors. "For since the law," says the critic, "thought it just to put Will out of its protection, Will thought it but prudent to put himself out of its power."

* The Dean of Peterborough—"I was," says he, "about seventeen, when I first came to town; an oddlooking boy, with short rough hair, and that sort of awkwardness which one always brings out of the country with one: however, in spite of my bashfulness and appearance, I used now and then to thrust myself into Will's, to have the pleasure of seeing the most celebrated wits of that time, who used to resort thither. The second time that ever I was there, Mr. Dryden was speaking of his own things, as he frequently did, especially of such as had been lately published. 'If any thing of mine is good,' says he, ''tis my MacFlecknoe; and I value myself the more on it, because it is the first piece of ridicule written in heroics.' Lockier overhearing this, plucked up his spirit so far, as to say, in a voice just loud enough to be heard, that MacFlecknoe was a very fine poem, but that he had not imagined it to be the first that ever was wrote that way. On this Dryden turned short upon him, as surprised at his interposing; asked how long he had been a dealer in poetry; and added, with a smile,—'But, pray sir, what is it, that you did imagine to have been writ so before?' Lockier named Boileau's Lutrin, and Tassoni's Secchia Rapita; which he had read, and knew Dryden had borrowed some strokes from each. 'Tis true,' says Dryden;—'I had forgot them.' A little after, Dryden went out, and in going spoke to Lockier again, and desired him to come to him the next day. Lockier was highly delighted with the invitation, and was well acquainted with him as long as he lived."—MALONE.

† "I have often heard," says Mr. George Russell, "that Mr. Dryden, dissatisfied and envious at the reputation Creech obtained by his translation of Lucretius, purposely advised him to undertake Horace, to which he knew him unequal, that he might by his ill performance lose the fame he had acquired. Mr. Southerne, author of 'Oroonoko,' set me right as to the conduct of Mr. Dryden in this affair; affirming, that, being one evening at Mr. Dryden's lodgings, in company with Mr. Creech, and some other ingenious men, Mr. Creech told the company of his design to translate Horace; from which Mr. Dryden, with many arguments, dissuaded him, as an attempt which his genius was not adapted to, and which would risk his losing the good opinion the world had of him, by his successful translation of Lucretius. I thought it proper to acquaint you with this circumstance, since it rescues the fame of one of our greatest poets from the imputation of envy and malevolence." Yet Jacob Tonson told Spence, "that Dryden would compliment Crowne when a play of his failed, but was cold to him if he met with success."

the subject. A contemporary authority, the reference to which I have mislaid, says, that Dryden was shy and silent in society, till a moderate circulation of the bottle had removed his natural reserve, and that he frequently justified this degree of conviviality by saying, "there was no deceit in a brimmer." But, although no enemy to conviviality, Dryden is pronounced by Pope to have been regular in his hours, in comparison with Addison, who, otherwise, lived the same coffeehouse course of life. He has himself told us, that he was "saturnine and reserved, and not one of those who endeavour to entertain company by lively sallies of merriment and wit;" and an adversary has put into his mouth this couplet:

> Nor wine nor love could ever see me gay;
> To writing bred, I knew not what to say.
> *Dryden's Satire to his Muse.*

But the admission of the author, and the censure of the satirist, must be received with some limitation. Dryden was thirty years old before he was freed from the fetters of puritanism; and if the habits of lively expression in society are not acquired before that age, they are seldom gained afterward. But this applies only to the deficiency of repartee, in the sharp encounter of wit which was fashionable at the court of Charles, and cannot be understood to exclude Dryden's possessing the more solid qualities of agreeable conversation, arising from a memory profoundly stocked with knowledge, and a fancy which supplied modes of illustration faster than the author could use them.* Some few sayings of Dryden have been, however, preserved; which, if not witty, are at least jocose. He is said to have been the original author of the repartee to the Duke of Buckingham, who, in bowling, offered to lay "his soul to a turnip," or something still more vile. "Give me the odds," said Dryden, "and I take the bet." When his wife wished to be a book, that she might enjoy more of his company, "Be an almanac then, my dear," said the poet, "that I may change you once a-year." Another time, a friend expressing his astonishment that even D'Urfey could write such stuff as a play they had just witnessed, "Ah, sir," replied Dryden, "you do not know my friend Tom so well as I do; I'll answer for him, he can write worse yet." None of these anecdotes intimate great brilliancy of repartee; but that Dryden, possessed of such a fund of imagination, and acquired learning, should

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* His conversation is thus characterized by a contemporary writer—

"O, sir, there's a medium in all things. Silence and chat are distant enough, to have a convenient discourse come between them; and thus far I agree with you, that the company of the author of 'Absalom and Achitophel' is more valuable, though not so talkative, than that of the modern men of *banter*; for what he says is like what he writes, much to the purpose, and full of mighty sense; and if the town were for any thing desirable, it were for the conversation of him, and one or two more of the same character."—*The Humours and Conversation of the Town exposed, in two Dialogues*, 1693.

be dull in conversation, is impossible. He is known frequently to have regaled his friends, by communicating to them a part of his labours; but his poetry suffered by his recitation. He read his productions very ill;* owing, perhaps, to the modest reserve of his temper, which prevented his showing an animation in which he feared his audience might not participate. The same circumstance may have repressed the liveliness of his conversation. I know not, however, whether we are, with Mr. Malone, to impute to diffidence his general habit of consulting his literary friends upon his poems, before they became public, since it might as well arise from a wish to anticipate and soften criticism.

Of Dryden's learning, his works form the best proof. He had read Polybius before he was ten years of age; and was doubtless well acquainted with the Greek and Roman classics. But from these studies he could descend to read romances; and the present editor records with pride, that Dryden was a decided admirer of old ballads, and popular tales.† His researches sometimes extended into the vain province of judicial astrology, in which he was a firm believer; and there is reason to think that he also credited divination by dreams. In the country, he delighted in the pastime of fishing, and used, says Mr. Malone, to spend some time with Mr. Jones of Ramsden, in Wiltshire. D'Urfey was sometimes of this party; but Dryden appears to have undervalued his skill in fishing, as much as his attempts at poetry. Hence Fenton, in his epistle to Mr. Lambard:

> By long experience, D'Urfey may no doubt
> Ensnare a gudgeon, or sometimes a trout;
> Yet Dryden once exclaim'd, in partial spite,
> "He *fish!*"—because the man attempts to write.

I may conclude this notice of Dryden's habits, which I have been enabled to give chiefly by the researches of Mr. Malone, with two notices of a minute nature. Dryden was a great taker of snuff, which he prepared himself. Moreover, as a preparation to a course of study, he usually took medicine, and observed a cooling diet.

Dryden's house, which he appears to have resided in from the period of his marriage till his death, was in Gerard-street, the fifth on

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* "When Dryden, our first great master of verse and harmony, brought his play of 'Amphitryon' to the stage, I heard him give it his first reading to the actors; in which, though it is true he delivered the plain sense of every period, yet the whole was in so cold, so flat, and unaffecting a manner, that I am afraid of not being believed, when I affirm it."—*Cibber's Apology.*

† I find," says Gildon, "Mr. Bayes, the younger, [Rowe], has two qualities like Mr. Bayes, the elder [Dryden], his admiration of some odd books, as 'Reynard the Fox,' and the old ballads of 'Jane Shore,' &c."—*Remarks on Mr. Rowe's Plays.*

Reynard the Fox" is also mentioned in "The Town and Country Mouse," as a favourite book of Dryden's. And Addison, in the 85th number of the *Spectator*, informs us, that Dorset and Dryden delighted in perusing the collection of old ballads which the latter possessed.

the left hand coming from Little Newport-street.* The back windows looked upon the gardens of Leicester House, of which circumstance our poet availed himself to pay a handsome compliment to the noble owner. His excursions to the country seem to have been frequent; perhaps the more so, as Lady Elizabeth always remained in town. In his latter days, the friendship of his relations, John Driden, of Chesterton, and Mrs. Steward of Cotterstock, rendered their houses agreeable places of abode to the aged poet. They appear also to have had a kind solicitude about his little comforts, of value infinitely beyond the contributions which they made towards aiding them. And thus concludes all that we have learned of the private life of Dryden.

The fate of Dryden's family must necessarily interest the admirers of English literature. It consisted of his wife, Lady Elizabeth Dryden, and three sons, John, Charles, and Erasmus-Henry. Upon the poet's death, it may be believed, they felt themselves slenderly provided for, since all his efforts, while alive, were necessary to secure them from the grip of penury. Yet their situation was not very distressing. John and Erasmus-Henry were abroad; and each had an office at Rome, by which he was able to support himself. Charles had for some time been entirely dependent on his father, and administered to his effects, as he died without a will. The liberality of the Duchess of Ormond, and of Driden, of Chesterton, had been lately received, and probably was not expended. There was, besides, the poet's little patrimonial estate, and a small property in Wiltshire, which the Earl of Berkshire settled upon Lady Elizabeth at her marriage, and which yielded 50*l.* or 60*l.* annually. There was, therefore, an income of about 100*l.* a year, to maintain the poet's widow and children; enough in those times to support them in decent frugality.

Lady Elizabeth Dryden's temper had long disturbed her husband's domestic happiness. "His invectives," says Mr. Malone, "against the married state. are frequent and bitter, and were continued to the latest period of his life;" and he adds, from most respectable authority, that the family of the poet held no intimacy with his lady, confining their intercourse to mere visits of ceremony. A similar alienation seems to have taken place between her and her own relations, Sir Robert Howard, perhaps, being excepted; for her brother, the Honourable Edward Howard, talks of Dryden's being engaged in a translation of Virgil, as a thing he had learned merely by common report. Her wayward disposition was, however, the effect of a disordered imagination, which, shortly after Dryden's death, degenerated into absolute insanity, in which state she remained until her death in the summer of 1714, probably, says, Mr. Malone, in the seventy-ninth year of her life.

Dryden's three sons, says the inscription by Mrs. Creed, were ingenious and accomplished gentlemen. Charles, the eldest, and

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* It is now No. 43.

favourite son of the poet, was born at Charlton, Wiltshire, in 1666. He received a classical education under Dr. Busby, his father's preceptor, and was chosen King's Scholar, in 1680. Being elected to Trinity College, in Cambridge, he was admitted a member in 1683. It would have been difficult for the son of Dryden to refrain from attempting poetry; but though Charles escaped the fate of Icarus, he was very, very far from emulating his father's soaring flight. Mr. Malone has furnished a list of his compositions in Latin and English. About 1692 he went to Italy, and through the interest of Cardinal Howard, to whom he was related by the mother's side, he became Chamberlain of the Household; not, as Corinna pretends, "to that remarkably fine gentleman, Pope Clement XI." but to Pope Innocent XII. His way to this preferment was smoothed by a pedigree drawn up in Latin by his father, of the families of Dryden and Howard, which is said to have been deposited in the Vatican. Dryden, whose turn for judicial astrology we have noticed, had calculated the nativity of his son Charles; and it would seem, that a part of his predictions were fortuitously fulfilled. Charles, however, having suffered, while at Rome, by a fall, and his health, in consequence, being much injured, his father prognosticated he would begin to recover in the month of September, 1697. The issue did no great credit to the prediction; for young Dryden returned to England in 1698 in the same indifferent state of health, as is obvious from the anxious solicitude with which his father always mentions Charles in his correspondence. Upon the poet's death, Charles, we have seen, administered to his effects on 10th June, 1700, Lady Elizabeth, his mother, renouncing the succession. In the next year, Granville conferred on him the profits arising from the author's night of an alteration of Shakspeare's "Merchant of Venice;" and his liberality to the son of one great bard may be admitted to balance his presumption, in manufacturing a new drama out of the labours of another. Upon the 20th August, 1704, Charles Dryden was drowned, in an attempt to swim across the Thames, at Datchet, near Windsor.

John Dryden, the poet's second son, was born in 1667, or 1668, was admitted a King's Scholar in Westminster in 1682, and elected to Oxford in 1685. Here he became a private pupil of the celebrated Obadiah Walker, Master of University College, a Roman Catholic. It seems probable that young Dryden became a convert to that faith before his father. His religion making it impossible for him to succeed in England, he followed his brother Charles to Rome, where he officiated as his deputy in the Pope's household. John Dryden translated the fourteenth Satire of Juvenal, published in his father's version, and wrote a comedy entitled, "The Husband his own Cuckold," acted in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields in 1696; Dryden, the father, furnishing a prologue, and Congreve an epilogue. In 1700-1, he made a tour through Sicily and Malta, and his journal was published in 1706. It seems odd, that in the whole course of his journal, he never mentions his father's name, nor makes the least allusion to his

very recent death. John Dryden, the younger, died at Rome soon after this excursion.

Erasmus-Henry, Dryden's third son, was born 2nd May, 1669, and educated in the Charter-House, to which he was nominated by Charles II., shortly after the publication of "Absalom and Achitophel." He does not appear to have been at any university; probably his religion was the obstacle. Like his brothers, he went to Rome; and as both his father and mother request his prayers, we are to suppose he was originally destined for the church. But he became a Captain in the Pope's guards, and remained at Rome till John Dryden, his elder brother's death. After this event, he seems to have returned to England, and in 1708 succeeded to the title of Baronet, as representative of Sir Erasmus Driden, the author's grandfather. But the estate of Canons-Ashby, which should have accompanied and supported the title, had been devised by Sir Robert Driden, the poet's first cousin, to Edward Dryden, the eldest son of Erasmus, the younger brother of the poet. Thus, if the author had lived a few years longer, his pecuniary embarrassments would have been embittered by his succeeding to the honours of his family, without any means of sustaining the rank they gave him. With this Edward Dryden, Sir Erasmus-Henry seems to have resided until his death, which took place at the family mansion of Canons-Ashby in 1710. Edward acted as a manager of his cousin's affairs; and Mr. Malone sees reason to think, from their mode of accounting, that Sir Erasmus-Henry had, like his mother, been visited with mental derangement before his death, and had resigned into Edward's hands the whole management of his concerns. Thus ended the poet's family, none of his sons surviving him above ten years. The estate of Canons-Ashby became again united to the title, in the person of John Dryden, the surviving brother.*

CHAPTER VIII.

The State of Dryden's Reputation at his Death, and afterwards—The general Character of his Mind—His Merit as a Dramatist—As a Lyrical Poet—As a Satirist—As a Narrative Poet—As a Philosophical and Miscellaneous Poet—As a Translator—As a Prose Author—As a Critic.

IF Dryden received but a slender share of the gifts of fortune, it was amply made up to him in reputation. Even while a poet militant upon earth, he received no ordinary portion of that applause, which is too often reserved for the "dull cold ear of death." He combated, it

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* Mr. Malone says, "Edward Dryden, the eldest son of the last Sir Erasmus Dryden, left by his wife, Elizabeth Allen, who died in London in 1761, five sons; the youngest of whom, Bevil, was father of the present Lady Dryden. Sir John, the eldest, survived all his brothers, and died without issue, at Canons-Ashby, March 20, 1770."

is true, but he conquered; and, in despite of faction, civil and religious, of penury, and the contempt which follows it, of degrading patronage, and rejected solicitation, from 1666 to the year of his death, the name of Dryden was first in English literature. Nor was his fame limited to Britain. Of the French literati, although Boileau,* with unworthy affectation, when he heard of the honours paid to the poet's remains, pretended ignorance even of his name, yet Rapin, the famous critic, learned the English language on purpose to read the works of Dryden.† Sir John Shadwell, the son of our author's ancient adversary, bore an honourable and manly testimony to the general regret among the men of letters at Paris for the death of Dryden. "The men of letters here lament the loss of Mr. Dryden very much. The honours paid to him have done our countrymen no small service; for, next to having so considerable a man of our own growth, 'tis a reputation to have known how to value him; as patrons very often pass for wits, by esteeming those that are so." And from another authority we learn, that the engraved copies of Dryden's portrait were bought up with avidity on the Continent.‡

But in England the loss of Dryden was as a national deprivation. It is seldom the extent of such a loss is understood, till it has taken place; as the size of an object is best estimated, when we see the space void which it has long occupied. The men of literature, starting as it were from a dream, began to heap commemorations, panegyrics, and elegies; the great were as much astonished at their own neglect of such an object of bounty, as if the same omission had never been practised before; and expressed as much compunction, as it were never to occur again. The poets were not silent; but their strains only evinced their woeful degeneracy from him whom they mourned. Henry Playford, a publisher of music, collected their effusions into a compilation, entitled, "Luctus Britannici, or the Tears of the British Muses, for the death of John Dryden;" which he published about two months after Dryden's death.§ Nine ladies, assuming each the character of a Muse, and clubbing a funeral ode, or elegy, produced "The Nine Muses:" an ode on the same subject, by Oldys, was also published.

The more costly, though equally unsubstantial, honour of a monument, was projected by Montagne; and loud were the acclamations of the poets on his generous forgiveness of past discords with Dryden, and the munificence of this universal patron. But Montagne never accomplished his purpose, if he seriously entertained it. Pelham, Duke of Newcastle, announced the same intention; received

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* "Life and Works of Arthur Maynwaring, 1715."

† So says Charles Blount, in the dedication to the *Religio Laici*. He is contradicted by Tom Brown.

‡ In a poem published on Dryden's death, by Brome, written, as Mr. Malone conjectures, by Captain Gibbon, son of the physician.

§ In *The Post Boy*, May 7, 1700.

the panegyric of Congreve for having done so; and, having thus pocketed the applause, proceeded no further than Montague had done. At length Pope, in some lines which were rather an epitaph on Dryden, who lay in the vicinity, than on Rowe, over whose tomb they were to be placed, roused Dryden's original patron, Sheffield, formerly Earl of Mulgrave, and now Duke of Buckingham, to erect over the grave of his friend the present simple monument which distinguishes it. The inscription was comprised in the following words:—"J. Dryden. Natus 1632. Mortuus 1 Maii 1700. Joannes Sheffield Dux Buckinghamiensis posuit, 1720."*

In the school of reformed English poetry, of which Dryden must be acknowledged as the founder, there soon arose disciples not unwilling to be considered as the rivals of their master. Addison had his partizans, who were desirous to hold him up in this point of view; and he himself is said to have taken pleasure, with the assistance of Steele, to depreciate Dryden, whose fame was defended by Pope and Congreve. No serious invasion of Dryden's pre-eminence can be said, however, to have taken place, till Pope himself, refining upon that structure of versification which our author had first introduced, and attending with sedulous diligence to improve every passage to the highest pitch of point and harmony, exhibited a new style of composition, and claimed at least to share with Dryden the sovereignty of Parnassus. I will not attempt to concentrate what Johnson has said upon this interesting comparison:

"In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who, before he became an author, had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

"Poetry was not the sole praise of either; for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

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* The epitaph at first intended by Pope for this monument was—

This Sheffield rais'd; the sacred dust below
Was Dryden once:—the rest, who does not know?

"Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality, without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert; that energy, which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred, that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer, since Milton, must give place to Pope: and even of Dryden it must be said, that if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden, therefore, are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight."

As the eighteenth century advanced, the difference between the styles of these celebrated authors became yet more manifest. It was then obvious, that though Pope's felicity of expression, his beautiful polish of sentiment, and the occasional brilliancy of his wit, were not easily imitated, yet many authors, by dint of a good ear, and a fluent expression, learned to command the unaltered sweetness of his melody, which, like a favourite tune, which has descended to hawkers and ballad-singers, became palling and even disgusting as it became common. The admirers of poetry then reverted to the brave negligence of Dryden's versification, as, to use Johnson's simile, the eye, fatigued with the uniformity of a lawn, seeks variety in the uncultivated glade or swelling mountain. The preference for which Dennis, asserting the cause of Dryden, had raved and thundered in vain, began, by degrees, to be assigned to the elder bard; and many a poet sheltered his harsh verses and inequalities under an assertion that he belonged to the school of Dryden. Churchill—

> Who, born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind,—

Churchill was one of the first to seek in the "Mac-Flecknoe," the "Absalom," and the "Hind and Panther," authority for bitter and personal sarcasm, couched in masculine, though irregular versification, flashed from the pen without revision, and admitting occasional rude and flat passages, to afford the author a spring to comparative elevation. But imitation always approaches to caricature; and the powers of Churchill have been unable to protect him from the oblivion into which his poems are daily sinking, owing to the ephemeral interest of political subjects, and his indolent negligence of severe study and

regularity. To imitate Dryden, it were well to study his merits, without venturing to adopt the negligences and harshness, which the hurry of his composition, and the comparative rudeness of his age, rendered in him excusable. At least, those who venture to sink as low, should be confident of the power of soaring as high; for surely it is a rash attempt to dive, unless in one conscious of ability to swim.

While the beauties of Dryden may be fairly pointed out as an object of emulation, it is the less pleasing, but not less necessary, duty of his biographer and editor, to notice those deficiencies, which his high and venerable name may excuse, but cannot render proper objects of applause or imitation.

So much occasional criticism has been scattered in various places through these pages, that, while attempting the consideration of one or two of his distinguishing and pre-eminent compositions, which have been intentionally reserved to illustrate a few pages of general criticism, I feel myself free from the difficult, and almost contradictory task, of drawing my maxims and examples from the extended course of his literary career. My present task is limited to deducing his poetic character from those works which he formed on his last and most approved model. The general tone of his genius, however, influenced the whole course of his publications; and upon that, however modified and varied by the improvement of his taste, a few preliminary notices may not be misplaced.

The distinguishing characteristic of Dryden's genius seems to have been, the power of reasoning, and of expressing the result in appropriate language. This may seem slender praise; yet these were the talents that led Bacon into the recesses of philosophy, and conducted Newton to the cabinet of nature. The prose works of Dryden bear repeated evidence to his philosophical powers. His philosophy was not indeed of a formed and systematic character; for he is often contented to leave the path of argument which must have conducted him to the fountain of truth, and to resort with indolence or indifference to the leaky cisterns which had been hewn out by former critics. But where his pride or his taste are interested, he shows evidently, that it was not deficiency in the power of systematizing, but want of the time and patience necessary to form a system, which occasioned the discrepancy that we often notice in his critical and philological disquisitions. This power of ratiocination, of investigating, discovering, and appreciating that which is really excellent, if accompanied with the necessary command of fanciful illustration and elegant expression, is the most interesting quality which can be possessed by a poet. It must indeed have a share in the composition of every thing that is truly estimable in the fine arts, as well as in philosophy. Nothing is so easily attained as the power of presenting the extrinsic qualities of fine painting, fine music, or fine poetry; the beauty of colour and outline, the combination of notes, the melody of versification, may be imitated by artists of mediocrity; and many will view, hear, or peruse their performances, without being

able positively to discover why they should not, since composed according to all the rules, afford pleasure equal to those of Raphael, Handel, or Dryden. The deficiency lies in the vivifying spirit, which, like alcohol, may be reduced to the same principle in all the fine arts, though it assumes such varied qualities from the mode in which it is exerted or combined. Of this power of intellect, Dryden seems to have possessed almost an exuberant share, combined, as usual, with the faculty of correcting his own conceptions, by observing human nature, the practical and experimental philosophy as well of poetry as of ethics or physics. The early habits of Dryden's education and poetical studies gave his researches somewhat too much of a metaphysical character; and it was a consequence of his mental acuteness, that his dramatic personages often philosophized or reasoned, when they ought only to have felt. The more lofty, the fiercer, the more ambitious feelings, seem also to have been his favourite studies. Perhaps the analytical mode in which he exercised his studies of human life, tended to confine his observation to the more energetic feelings of pride, anger, ambition, and other high-toned passions. He that mixes in public life, must see enough of these stormy convulsions; but the finer and more imperceptible operations of love, in its sentimental modifications, if the heart of the author does not supply an example from its own feelings, cannot easily be studied at the expense of others. Dryden's bosom, it must be owned, seems to have afforded him no such means of information: the licence of his age, and perhaps the advanced period at which he commenced his literary career, had probably armed him against this more exalted strain of passion. The love of the senses he has in many places expressed, in as forcible and dignified colouring as the subject could admit; but of a mere moral and sentimental passion he seems to have had little idea, since he frequently substitutes in its place the absurd, unnatural, and fictitious refinements of romance. In short, his love is always in indecorous nakedness, or sheathed in the stiff panoply of chivalry. The most pathetic verses which Dryden has composed, are unquestionably contained in the epistle to Congreve, where he recommends his laurels, in such moving terms, to the care of his surviving friend. The quarrel and reconciliation of Sebastian and Dorax, is also full of the noblest emotion. In both cases, however, the interest is excited by means of masculine and exalted passion, not of those which arise from the mere delicate sensibilities of our nature; and, to use a Scottish phrase, "bearded men" weep at them, rather than Horace's audience of youths and maidens.

But if Dryden fails in expressing the milder and more tender passions, not only did the stronger feelings of the heart, in all its dark or violent workings, but the face of natural objects, and their operation upon the human mind, pass promptly in review at his command. External pictures, and their corresponding influence on the spectator, are equally ready at his summons; and though his poetry, from the nature of his subjects, is in general rather ethic and didactic, than

narrative, yet no sooner does he adopt the latter style of composition, than his figures and his landscapes are presented to the mind with the same vivacity as the flow of his reasoning, or the acute metaphysical discrimination of his characters.

Still the powers of observation and of deduction are not the only qualities essential to the poetical character. The philosopher may indeed prosecute his experimental researches into the *arcana* of nature, and announce them to the public through the medium of a friendly *rédacteur*, as the legislator of Israel obtained permission to speak to the people by the voice of Aaron; but the poet has no such privilege, nay, his doom is so far capricious, that, though he may be possessed of the primary quality of poetical conception to the highest possible extent, it is but like a lute without its strings, unless he has the subordinate, though equally essential, power of expressing what he feels and conceives, in appropriate and harmonious language. With this power Dryden's poetry was gifted, in a degree surpassing in modulated harmony that of all who had preceded him, and inferior to none that has since written English verse. He first showed that the English language was capable of uniting smoothness and strength. The hobbling verses of his predecessors were abandoned even by the lowest versifiers; and by the force of his precept and example, the meanest lampooners of the year seventeen hundred wrote smoother lines than Donne and Cowley, the chief poets of the earlier half of the seventeenth century. What was said of Rome adorned by Augustus, has been, by Johnson, applied to English poetry improved by Dryden; that he found it of brick, and left it of marble. This reformation was not merely the effect of an excellent ear, and a superlative command of gratifying it by sounding language; it was, we have seen, the effect of close, accurate, and continued study of the power of the English tongue. Upon what principles he adopted and continued his system of versification, he long meditated to communicate in his projected prosody of English poetry. The work, however, might have been more curious than useful, as there would have been some danger of its diverting the attention, and misguiding the efforts of poetical adventurers; for as it is more easy to be masons than architects, we may deprecate an art which might teach the world to value those who can build rhymes, without attending to the more essential qualities of poetry. Strict attention might no doubt discover the principle of Dryden's versification; but it seems no more essential to the analysing his poetry, than the principles of mathematics to understanding music, although the art necessarily depends on them. The extent in which Dryden reformed our poetry, is most readily proved by an appeal to the ear; and Dr. Johnson has forcibly stated, that "he knew how to choose the flowing and the sonorous words; to vary the pauses and adjust the accents; to diversify the cadence, and yet preserve the smoothness of the metre." To vary the English hexameter, he established the use of the triplet and Alexandrine. Though ridiculed by Swift, who vainly thought he

character. It is probable that, with these deficiencies, he felt the truth of his own acknowledgment, and that he was forced upon composing comedies to gratify the taste of the age, while the bent of his genius was otherwise directed.

In lyrical poetry, Dryden must be allowed to have no equal. "Alexander's Feast" is sufficient to show his supremacy in that brilliant department. In this exquisite production, he flung from him all the trappings with which his contemporaries had embarrassed the ode. The language, lofty and striking as the ideas are, is equally simple and harmonious; without far-fetched allusions, or epithets, or metaphors, the story is told as intelligibly as if it had been in the most humble prose. The change of tone in the harp of Timotheus, regulates the measure and the melody, and the language of every stanza. The hearer, while he is led on by the successive changes, experiences almost the feelings of the Macedonian and his peers; nor is the splendid poem disgraced by one word or line unworthy of it, unless we join in the severe criticism of Dr. Johnson, on the concluding stanzas. It is true, that the praise of St. Cecilia is rather abruptly introduced as a conclusion to the account of the Feast of Alexander; and it is also true, that the comparison,

> He raised a mortal to the sky,
> She drew an angel down,

is inaccurate, since the fate of Timotheus was metaphorical, and that of Cecilia literal. But, while we stoop to such criticism, we seek for blots in the sun.

Of Dryden's other pindarics, some, as the celebrated "Ode to the Memory of Mrs. Killigrew," are mixed with the leaven of Cowley; others, like the "Threnodia Augustalis," are occasionally flat and heavy. All contain passages of brilliancy, and all are thrown into a versification, melodious amidst its irregularity. We listen for the completion of Dryden's stanza, as for the explication of a difficult passage in music; and wild and lost as the sound appears, the ear is proportionally gratified by the unexpected ease with which harmony is extracted from discord and confusion.

The satirical powers of Dryden were of the highest order. He draws his arrow to the head, and dismisses it straight upon his object of aim. In this walk he wrought almost as great a reformation as upon versification in general; as will plainly appear, if we consider, that the satire, before Dryden's time, bore the same reference to "Absalom and Achitophel," which an ode of Cowley bears to "Alexander's Feast." Butler, and his imitators, had adopted a metaphysical satire, as the poets in the earlier part of the century had created a metaphysical vein of serious poetry. Both required store of learning to supply the perpetual expenditure of extraordinary and far-fetched illustration; the object of both was to combine and hunt down the strangest and most fanciful analogies; and both held the attention of

had exploded them for ever, their force is still acknowledged in classical poetry.

Of the various kinds of poetry which Dryden occasionally practised, the drama was that which, until the last six years of his life, he chiefly relied on for support. His style of tragedy, we have seen, varied with his improving taste, perhaps with the change of manners. Although the heroic drama, as we have described it at length in the preceding pages, presented the strongest temptation to the exercise of argumentative poetry in sounding rhyme, Dryden was at length contented to abandon it for the more pure and chaste style of tragedy, which professes rather the representation of human beings, than the creation of ideal perfection, or fantastic and anomalous characters. The best of Dryden's performances in this latter style, are unquestionably "Don Sebastian," and "All for Love." Of these, the former is in the poet's very best manner; exhibiting dramatic persons, consisting of such bold and impetuous characters as he delighted to draw, well contrasted, forcibly marked, and engaged in an interesting succession of events. To many tempers, the scene between Sebastian and Dorax, already noticed, must appear one of the most moving that ever adorned the British stage. Of "All for Love," we may say, that it is successful in a softer style of painting; and that so far as sweetness, can make amends for Dryden's deficiencies in describing the delicacies of sentimental passion, they are to be found in abundance in that piece.

Dryden's comedies, besides being stained with the licence of the age (a licence which he seems to use as much from necessity as choice), have, generally speaking, a certain heaviness of character. There are many flashes of wit; but the author has beaten his flint hard ere he struck them out. It is almost essential to the success of a jest, that it should at least seem to be extemporaneous. If we espy the joke at a distance, nay, if without seeing it we have the least reason to suspect we are travelling towards one, it is astonishing how the perverse obstinacy of our nature delights to refuse its currency. When, therefore, as is often the case in Dryden's comedies, two persons remain on the stage for no obvious purpose but to say good things, it is no wonder they receive but little thanks from an ungrateful audience. The incidents, therefore, and the characters, ought to be comic; but actual jests, or *bon mots*, should be rarely introduced, and then naturally, easily, without an appearance of premeditation, and bearing a strict conformity to the character of the person who utters them. Comic situation Dryden did not greatly study; indeed I hardly recollect any scene, unless the closing one of "The Spanish Friar," which indicates any peculiar felicity of invention. For comic character, he is usually contented to paint a generic representative of a certain class of men or women; a Father Dominic, for example, or a Melantha, with all the attributes of their calling and manners, strongly and divertingly portrayed, but without any individuality of

the reader perpetually on the stretch, to keep up with the meaning of the author. There can be no doubt, that this metaphysical vein was much better fitted for the burlesque than the sublime. Yet the perpetual scintillation of Butler's wit is too dazzling to be delightful; and we can seldom read far in "Hudibras" without feeling more fatigue than pleasure. His fancy is employed with the profusion of a spendthrift, by whose eternal round of banqueting his guests are at length rather wearied out than regaled. Dryden was destined to correct this among other errors of his age; to show the difference between burlesque and satire; and to teach his successors in that species of assault, rather to thrust than to flourish with their weapon. For this purpose he avoided the unvaried and unrelieved style of grotesque description and combination, which had been fashionable since the satires of Cleveland and Butler. To render the objects of his satire hateful and contemptible, he thought it necessary to preserve the lighter shades of character, if not for the purpose of softening the portrait, at least for that of preserving the likeness. While Dryden seized, and dwelt upon, and aggravated, all the evil features of his subject, he carefully retained just as much of its laudable traits as preserved him from the charge of want of candour, and fixed down the resemblance upon the party. And thus, instead of unmeaning caricatures, he presents portraits which cannot be mistaken, however unfavourable ideas they may convey of the originals. The character of Shaftesbury, both as Achitophel, and as drawn in "The Medal," bears peculiar witness to this assertion. While other court poets endeavoured to turn the obnoxious statesman into ridicule, on account of his personal infirmities and extravagances, Dryden boldly confers upon him all the praise for talent and for genius that his friends could have claimed, and trusts to the force of his satirical expression for working up even these admirable attributes with such a mixture of evil propensities and dangerous qualities, that the whole character shall appear dreadful, and even hateful, but not contemptible. But where a character of less note, a Shadwell or a Settle, crossed his path, the satirist did not lay himself under these restraints, but wrote in the language of bitter irony and unmeasurable contempt: even then, however, we are less called on to admire the wit of the author, than the force and energy of his poetical philippic. These are the verses which are made by indignation, and, no more than theatrical scenes of real passion, admit of refined and protracted turns of wit, or even the lighter sallies of humour. These last ornaments are proper in that Horatian satire, which rather ridicules the follies of the age, than stigmatizes the vices of individuals; but in this style Dryden has made few essays. He entered the field as champion of a political party, or as defender of his own reputation; discriminated his antagonists, and applied the scourge with all the vehemence of Juvenal. As he has himself said of that satirist, "his provocations were great, and he has revenged them tragically." This is the more worthy of notice, as, in the "Essay on Satire," Dryden gives a decided pre-

ference to those nicer and more delicate touches of satire, which consist in fine raillery. But whatever was the opinion of his cooler moments, the poet's practice was dictated by the furious party-spirit of the times, and the no less keen stimulative of personal resentment. It is perhaps to be regretted, that so much energy of thought, and so much force of expression, should have been wasted in anatomizing such criminals as Shadwell and Settle; yet we cannot account the amber less precious, because they are grubs and flies that are enclosed within it.

The "Fables" of Dryden are the best examples of his talents as a narrative poet: those powers of composition, description, and narration, which must have been called into exercise by the "Epic Muse," had his fate allowed him to enlist among her votaries. The "Knight's Tale," the longest and most laboured of Chaucer's stories, possesses a degree of regularity which might satisfy the most severe critic. It is true, that the honour arising from thence must be assigned to the more ancient bard, who had himself drawn his subject from an Italian model; but the high and decided preference which Dryden has given to this story, although somewhat censured by Trapp, enables us to judge how much the poet held an accurate combination of parts, and coherence of narrative, essentials of epic poetry. That a classic scholar like Trapp should think the plan of the "Knight's Tale" equal to that of the "Iliad," is a degree of candour not to be hoped for: but surely to an unprejudiced reader, a story which exhausts in its conclusion all the interest which it has excited in its progress, which, when terminated, leaves no question to be asked, no personage undisposed of, and no curiosity unsatisfied, is, abstractedly considered, more gratifying than the history of a few weeks of a ten years' war, commencing long after the siege had begun, and ending long before the city was taken. Of the other tales, it can hardly be said that their texture is more ingenious or closely woven than that of ordinary novels or fables: but in each of them Dryden has displayed the superiority of his genius, in selecting for amplification and ornament those passages most susceptible of poetical description. The account of the procession of the Fairy Chivalry in the "Flower and the Leaf:" the splendid description of the champions who came to assist at the tournament in the "Knight's Tale;" the account of the battle itself, its alternations and issue,—if they cannot be called improvements on Chaucer, are nevertheless so spirited a transfusion of his ideas into modern verse, as almost to claim the merit of originality. Many passages might be shown in which this praise may be carried still higher, and the merit of invention added to that of imitation. Such is the description of the commencement of the tourney, which is almost entirely original, and most of the ornaments in the translations from Boccaccio, whose prose fictions demanded more additions from the poet than the exuberant imagery of Chaucer. To select instances would be endless; but every reader of poetry has by heart the description of Iphigenia asleep, nor are the lines in "Theodore and Honoria," which describe the approach of the apparition, and its

effects upon animated and inanimated nature, even before it becomes visible, less eminent for beauties of the terrific order :

> While listening to the murmuring leaves he stood,
> More than a mile immersed within the wood,
> At once the wind was laid; the whispering sound
> Was dumb; a rising earthquake rocked the ground;
> With deeper brown the grove was overspread,
> A sudden horror seized his giddy head,
> And his ears tingled, and his colour fled.
> Nature was in alarm; some danger nigh
> Seemed threatened, though unseen to mortal eye.

It may be doubted, however, whether the simplicity of Boccaccio's narrative has not sometimes suffered by the additional decorations of Dryden. The retort of Guiscard to Tancred's charge of ingratitude is more sublime in the Italian original, than as diluted by the English poet into five hexameters. A worse fault occurs in the whole colouring of Sigismonda's passion, to which Dryden has given a coarse and indelicate character, which he did not derive from Boccaccio, though the Italian be apt enough to sin in that particular. In like manner, the plea used by Palamon in his prayer to Venus, is more nakedly expressed by Dryden than by Chaucer. The former, indeed, would probably have sheltered himself under the mantle of Lucretius; but he should have recollected, that Palamon speaks the language of chivalry, and ought not, to use an expression of Lord Herbert, to have spoken like a paillard, but a cavalier. Indeed, we have before noticed it as the most obvious and most degrading imperfection of Dryden's poetical imagination, that he could not refine that passion which, of all others, is susceptible either of the purest refinement, or of admitting the basest alloy. With Chaucer, Dryden's task was more easy than with Boccaccio. Barrenness was not the fault of the Father of English poetry; and amid the profusion of images which he presented, his imitator had only the task of rejecting or selecting. In the sublime description of the temple of Mars, painted around with all the misfortunes ascribed to the influence of his planet, it would be difficult to point out a single idea, which is not found in the older poem. But Dryden has judiciously omitted or softened some degrading and some disgusting circumstances; as the "cook scalded in spite of his long ladle," the "swine devouring the cradled infant," the "pickpurse," and other circumstances too grotesque or ludicrous, to harmonize with the dreadful group around them. Some points, also, of sublimity, have escaped the modern poet. Such is the appropriate and picturesque accompaniment of the statue of Mars :

> A wolf stood before him at his feet,
> With eyen red, and of a man he eat.*

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* An emblem of a similar kind (a tiger devouring a man) was found in the palace of Tippo Sultan.

In the dialogue, or argumentative parts of the poem, Dryden has frequently improved on his original, while he falls something short of him in simple description, or in pathetic effect. Thus, the quarrel between Arcite and Palamon is wrought up with greater energy by Dryden than Chaucer, particularly by the addition of the following lines, describing the enmity of the captives against each other:

> Now friends no more, nor walking hand in hand,
> But when they met, they made a surly stand,
> And glared like angry lions as they passed,
> And wished that every look might be their last.

But the modern must yield the palm, despite the beauty of his versification, to the description of Emily by Chaucer; and may be justly accused of loading the dying speech of Arcite with conceits for which his original gave no authority.

When the story is of a light and ludicrous kind, as the Fable of the Cock and Fox, and the Wife of Bath's Tale, Dryden displays all the humorous expression of his satirical poetry, without its personality. There is indeed a quaint Cervantic gravity in his mode of expressing himself, that often glances forth, and enlivens what otherwise would be mere dry narrative. Thus, he details certain things which past,

> While Cymon was *endeavouring* to be wise;

the force of which single word contains both a ludicrous and appropriate picture of the revolution which the force of love was gradually creating in the mind of the poor clown. The tone of expression he perhaps borrowed from Ariosto, and other poets of Italian chivalry, who are wont ever and anon to raise the mask, and smile even at the romantic tale they are themselves telling.

Leaving these desultory reflections on Dryden's powers of narrative, I cannot but notice, that, from haste or negligence, he has sometimes mistaken the sense of his author. Into the hands of the champions in the "Flower and the Leaf," he has placed *bows* instead of *boughs*, because the word is in the original spelled *bowes*; and, having made the error, he immediately devises an explanation of the device which he had mistaken:

> For bows the strength of brawny arms imply,
> Emblems of valour, and of victory.

He has, in like manner, accused Chaucer of introducing Gallicisms into the English language; not aware that French was the language of the court of England not long before Chaucer's time, and that, far from introducing French phrases into the English tongue, the ancient bard was successfully active in introducing the English as a fashionable dialect, instead of the French, which had, before his time, been the only language of polite literature in England. Other instances

might be given of similar oversights, which, in the situation of Dryden, are sufficiently pardonable.

Upon the whole, in introducing these romances of Boccaccio and Chaucer to modern readers, Dryden has necessarily deprived them of some of the charms which they possess for those who have perused them in their original state. With a tale or poem, by which we have been sincerely interested, we connect many feelings independent of those arising from actual poetical merit. The delight, arising from the whole, sanctions, nay sanctifies, the faulty passages; and even actual improvements, like supplements to a mutilated statue of antiquity, injure our preconceived associations, and hurt, by their incongruity with our feelings, more than they give pleasure by their own excellence. But to antiquaries Dryden has sufficiently justified himself, by declaring his version made for the sake of modern readers, who understand sense and poetry, as well as the old Saxon admirers of Chaucer, when that poetry and sense are put into words which they can understand. Let us also grant him, that, for the beauties which are lost, he has substituted many which the original did not afford; that, in passages of gorgeous description, he has added even to the chivalrous splendour of Chaucer, and has graced with poetical ornament the simplicity of Boccaccio; that, if he has failed in tenderness, he is never deficient in majesty; and that if the heart be sometimes untouched, the understanding and fancy are always exercised and delighted.

The philosophy of Dryden, we have already said, was that of original and penetrating genius; imperfect only, when, from want of time and of industry, he adopted the ideas of others, when he should have communed at leisure with his own mind. The proofs of his philosophical powers are not to be sought for in any particular poem or disquisition. Even the "Religio Laici," written expressly as a philosophical poem, only shows how easily the most powerful mind may entangle itself in sophistical toils of its own weaving; for the train of argument there pursued was completed by Dryden's conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. It is therefore in the discussion of incidental subjects, in his mode of treating points of controversy, in the new lights which he seldom fails to throw upon a controversial subject, in his talent of argumentative discussion, that we are to look for the character of Dryden's moral powers. His opinions, doubtless, are often inconsistent, and sometimes absolutely contradictory; for pressed by the necessity of discussing the object before him, he seldom looked back to what he said formerly, or forward to what he might be obliged to say in future. His sole subject of consideration was to maintain his present point; and that by authority, by declamation, by argument, by every means. But his philosophical powers are not the less to be estimated, because thus irregularly and unphilosophically employed. His arguments, even in the worst cause, bear witness to the energy of his mental conceptions; and the skill with which they are stated, elucidated, enforced, and exemplified, ever commands our admi-

ration, though, in the result, our reason may reject their influence. It must be remembered also, to Dryden's honour, that he was the first to hail the dawn of experimental philosophy in physics; to gratulate his country on possessing Bacon, Harvey, and Boyle; and to exult over the downfall of the Aristotelian tyranny. Had he lived to see a similar revolution commenced in ethics, there can be little doubt he would have welcomed it with the same delight; or had his leisure and situation permitted him to dedicate his time to investigating moral problems, he might himself have led the way to deliverance from error and uncertainty. But the dawn of reformation must ever be gradual, and the acquisitions even of those calculated to advance it must therefore frequently appear desultory and imperfect. The author of the *Novum Organum* believed in charms and occult sympathy; and Dryden in the chimeras of judicial astrology, and probably in the jargon of alchemy. When these subjects occur in his poetry, he dwells on them with a pleasure which shows the command they maintained over his mind. Much of the astrological knowledge displayed in the Knight's Tale is introduced, or at least amplified, by Dryden; and while, in the fable of the Cock and the Fox, he ridicules the doctrine of prediction from dreams, the inherent qualities of the four complexions,* and other abstruse doctrines of Paracelsus and his followers, we have good reason to suspect, that, like many other scoffers, he believed in the efficacy and truth of the subject of his ridicule. However this shade of credulity may injure Dryden's character as a philosopher, we cannot regret its influence on his poetry. Collins has thus celebrated Fairfax:

> Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
> Believed the magic wonders which he sung.

Nor can there be a doubt, that, as every work of imagination is tinged with the author's passions and prejudices, it must be deep and energetic in proportion to the character of these impressions. Those superstitious sciences and pursuits, which would, by mystic rites, doctrines, and inferences, connect us with the invisible world of spirits, or guide our daring researches to a knowledge of future events, are indeed usually found to cow, crush, and utterly stupefy, understandings of a lower rank; but if the mind of a man of acute powers, and of

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* These I found quaintly summed up in an old rhyme:—

> With a red man read thy rede,
> With a brown man break thy bread,
> On a pale man draw thy knife,
> From a black man keep thy wife.—S.

We have heard it—

> From a white man guard thy life.

And an eminent judge who repeated the lines testified to the general truth of this one. [EDIT.]

warm fancy, becomes slightly imbued with the visionary feelings excited by such studies, their obscure and undefined influence is ever found to aid the sublimity of his ideas, and to give that sombre and serious effect, which he can never produce, who does not himself feel the awe which it is his object to excite. The influence of such a mystic creed is often felt where the cause is concealed; for the habits thus acquired are not confined to their own sphere of belief, but gradually extend themselves over every adjacent province: and perhaps we may not go too far in believing, that he who has felt their impression, though only in one branch of faith, becomes fitted to describe, with an air of reality and interest, not only kindred subjects, but superstitions altogether opposite to his own. The religion, which Dryden finally adopted, lent its occasional aid to the solemn colouring of some of his later productions.

Tho occasional poetry of Dryden is marked strongly by masculine character. The Epistles vary with the subject; and are light, humorous, and satirical, or grave, argumentative, and philosophical, as the case required. In his Elegies, although they contain touches of true feeling, especially where the stronger passions are to be illustrated, the poet is often content to substitute reasoning for passion, and rather to show us cause why we ought to grieve, than to set us the example by grieving himself. The inherent defect in Dryden's composition becomes here peculiarly conspicuous; yet we should consider, that, in composing elegies for the Countess of Abingdon, whom he never saw, and for Charles II., by whom he had been cruelly neglected, and doubtless on many similar occasions, Dryden could not even pretend to be interested in the mournful subject of his verse; but attended, with his poem, as much in the way of trade, as the undertaker, on the same occasion, came with his sables and his scutcheon. The poet may interest himself and his reader, even to tears, in the fate of a being altogether the creation of his own fancy, but hardly by a hired panegyric on a real subject, in whom his heart acknowledges no other interest than a fee can give him. Few of Dryden's elegiac effusions, therefore, seem prompted by sincere sorrow. That to Oldham may be an exception; but, even there, he rather strives to do honour to the talents of his departed friend, than to pour out lamentations for his loss. Of the Prologues and Epilogues some of them are coarsely satirical, and others grossly indelicate. Those spoken at Oxford are the most valuable, and contain much good criticism and beautiful poetry. But the worst of them was probably well worth the petty recompense which the poet received.* The songs and smaller pieces of Dryden have smoothness, wit, and when addressed to

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* On the authority of the "Life of Southerne," it is stated that Dryden had originally five guineas for each prologue, and raised the sum to ten guineas on occasion of Southerne's requiring such a favour for his first play. But I am convinced the sum is exaggerated; and incline now to believe, with Dr. Johnson, that the advance was from *two* to *three* guineas only.

ladies, gallantry in profusion, but are deficient in tenderness. They seem to have been composed with great ease; thrown together hastily and occasionally; nor can we doubt that many of them are now irrecoverably lost. Mr. Malone gives us an instance of Dryden's fluency in extempore composition, which was communicated to him by Mr. Walcott. "Conversation, one day after dinner, at Mrs. Creed's, running upon the origin of names, Mr. Dryden bowed to the good old lady, and spoke extempore the following verses:—

So much religion in *your* name doth dwell,
Your soul must needs with piety excell.
Thus names, like [well-wrought] pictures drawn of old,
Their owners' nature and their story told—
Your name but half expresses; for in you
Belief and practice do together go.
My prayers shall be, while this short life endures,
These may go hand in hand, with you and yours;
Till faith hereafter is in vision drowned,
And practice is with endless glory crowned.

The Translations of Dryden form a distinguished part of his poetical labours. No author, excepting Pope, has done so much to endenizen the eminent poets of antiquity. In this sphere also, it was the fate of Dryden to become a leading example to future poets, and to abrogate laws which had been generally received, although they imposed such trammels on translation as to render it hardly intelligible. Before his distinguished success showed that the object of the translator should be to transfuse the spirit, not to copy servilely the very words of his original, it had been required, that line should be rendered for line, and, almost, word for word. It may easily be imagined, that, by the constraint and inversion which this cramping statute required, a poem was barely rendered not Latin, instead of being made English, and that, to the mere native reader, as the connoisseur complains in "The Critic," the interpreter was sometimes "the harder to be understood of the two." Those who seek examples, may find them in the jaw-breaking translations of Ben Jonson and Holyday. Cowley and Denham had indeed rebelled against this mode of translation, which conveys pretty much the same idea of an original, as an imitator would do of the gait of another, by studiously stepping after him into every trace which his feet had left upon the sand. But they assumed a licence equally faulty, and claimed the privilege of writing what might be more properly termed imitations, than versions of the classics. It was reserved to Dryden manfully to claim and vindicate the freedom of a just translation; more limited than paraphrase, but free from the metaphrastic severity exacted from his predecessors.

With these free, yet unlicentious principles, Dryden brought to the task of translation a competent knowledge of the language of the originals, with an unbounded command of his own. The latter is, however, by far the most marked characteristic of his translations. Dryden was not indeed deficient in Greek and Roman learning; but he

paused not to weigh and sift those difficult and obscure passages, at which the most learned will doubt and hesitate for the correct meaning. The same rapidity, which marked his own poetry, seems to have attended his study of the classics. He seldom waited to analyse the sentence he was about to render, far less scrupulously to weigh the precise purport and value of every word it contained. If he caught the general spirit and meaning of the author, and could express it with equal force in English verse, he cared not if minute elegances were lost, or the beauties of accurate proportion destroyed, or a dubious interpretation hastily adopted on the credit of a *scholium*. He used abundantly the licence he has claimed for a translator, to be deficient rather in the language out of which he renders, than that into which he translates. If such be but master of the sense of his author, Dryden argues, he may express that sense with eloquence in his own tongue, though he understand not the nice turns of the original. "But without the latter quality he can never arrive at the useful and the delightful, without which reading is a penance and fatigue."* With the same spirit of haste, Dryden is often contented to present to the English reader some modern image, which he may at once fully comprehend, instead of rendering precisely a classic expression, which might require explanation or paraphrase. Thus the *pulchra Sicyonia*, or buskins of Sicyon, are rendered,

> Diamond-buckles sparkling in their shoes.

By a yet more unfortunate adaptation of modern technical phraseology, the simple direction of Helenus,

> *Læva tibi tellus, et longo læva petantur*
> *Æquora circuitu: dextrum fuge littus et undas,*

is translated,

> Tack to the larboard, and stand off to sea,
> Veer starboard sea and land.

A counsel which, I shrewdly suspect, would have been unintelligible, not only to Palinurus, but to the best pilot in the British navy. In the same tone, but with more intelligibility, if not felicity, Dryden translates *palatia cœli* in Ovid, the *Louvre of the sky;* and, in the version of the First Book of Homer, talks of the court of Jupiter in the phrases used at that of Whitehall. These expressions, proper to modern manners, often produce an unfortunate confusion between the age in which the scene is laid, and the date of the translation. No judicious poet is willing to break the interest of a tale of ancient times by allusions peculiar to his own period: but when the translator, instead of identifying himself as closely as possible with the original author, pretends to such liberty, he removes us a third step from the

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* Life of Lucian.

time of action, and so confounds the manners of no less than three distinct eras,—that in which the scene is laid, that in which the poem was written, and that, finally, in which the translation was executed. There are passages in Dryden's Æneid, which, in the revolution of a few pages, transport our ideas from the time of Troy's siege to that of the court of Augustus, and thence downward to the reign of William the Third, of Britain.

It must be owned, at the same time, that when the translator places before you, not the exact words, but the image of the original, as the classic author would probably have himself expressed it in English, the licence, when moderately employed, has an infinite charm for those readers for whose use translations are properly written. Pope's Homer and Dryden's Virgil can never indeed give exquisite satisfaction to scholars, accustomed to study the Greek and Latin originals. The minds of such readers have acquired a classic tone; and not merely the ideas and poetical imagery, but the manners and habits of the actors, have become intimately familiar to them. They will not, therefore, be satisfied with any translation in which these are violated, whether for the sake of indolence in the translator, or ease to the unlettered reader; and perhaps they will be more pleased that a favourite bard should move with less ease and spirit in his new habiliments, than that his garments should be cut upon the model of the country to which the stranger is introduced. In the former case, they will readily make allowance for the imperfection of modern language; in the latter, they will hardly pardon the sophistication of ancient manners. But the mere English reader, who finds rigid adherence to antique costume rather embarrassing than pleasing, who is prepared to make no sacrifices in order to preserve the true manners of antiquity, shocking perhaps to his feelings and prejudices, is satisfied that the Iliad and Æneid shall lose their antiquarian merit, provided they retain that vital spirit and energy, which is the soul of poetry in all languages, and countries, and ages whatsoever. He who sits down to Dryden's translation of Virgil, with the original text spread before him, will be at no loss to point out many passages that are faulty, many indifferently understood, many imperfectly translated, some in which dignity is lost, others in which bombast is substituted in its stead. But the unabated vigour and spirit of the version more than overbalance these and all its other deficiencies. A sedulous scholar might often approach more nearly to the dead letter of Virgil, and give an exact, distinct, sober-minded idea of the meaning and scope of particular passages. Trapp, Pitt, and others have done so. But the essential spirit of poetry is so volatile, that it escapes during such an operation, like the life of the poor criminal, whom the ancient anatomist is said to have dissected alive, in order to ascertain the seat of the soul. The carcase indeed is presented to the English reader, but the animating vigour is no more. It is in this art, of communicating the ancient poet's ideas with force and energy equal to his own, that Dryden has so completely exceeded all who have gone before, and all

who have succeeded him. The beautiful and unequalled version of the Tale of Myrrha in the "Metamorphoses," the whole of the Sixth Æneid, and many other parts of Dryden's translations, are sufficient, had he never written one line of original poetry, to vindicate the well-known panegyric of Churchill:

> Here let me bend, great Dryden, at thy shrine,
> Thou dearest name to all the tuneful Nine!
> What if some dull lines in cold order creep,
> And with his theme the poet seems to sleep?
> Still, when his subject rises proud to view,
> With equal strength the poet rises too:
> With strong invention, noblest vigour fraught,
> Thought still springs up, and rises out of thought,
> Numbers ennobling numbers in the course,
> In varied sweetness flow, in varied force;
> The powers of genius and of judgment join,
> And the whole art of poetry is thine.

We are in this disquisition naturally tempted to inquire whether Dryden would have succeeded in his proposed design to translate Homer, as happily as in his Virgil? And although he himself has declared the genius of the Grecian to be more fiery, and therefore better suited to his own than that of the Roman poet, there may be room to question, whether in this case, he rightly estimated his own talents, or rather, whether, being fully conscious of their extent, he was aware of labouring under certain deficiencies of taste, which must have been more apparent in a version of the Iliad than of the Æneid. If a translator has any characteristic and peculiar foible, it is surely unfortunate to choose an original, who may give peculiar facilities to exhibit them. Thus, even Dryden's repeated disclamation of puns, points, and quibbles, and all the repentance of his more sober hours, was unable, as soon as he began to translate Ovid, to prevent his sliding back into the practice of that false wit with which his earlier productions are imbued. Hence he has been seduced, by the similarity of style, to add to the offences of his original, and introduce, though it needed not, points or wit and antithetical prettinesses, for which he cannot plead Ovid's authority. For example, he makes Ajax say of Ulysses, when surrounded by the Trojans,

> No wonder if he roared that all might hear,
> His elocution was increased by fear.

The Latin only bears, *conclamat socios.* A little lower,

> *Opposui molem clypei, texique jacentem,*

is amplified by a similar witticism,

> My broad buckler hid him from the foe,
> Even the shield trembled as he lay below.

If, in translating Ovid, Dryden was tempted by the manner of his

original to relapse into a youthful fault, which he had solemnly repented of and abjured, there is surely room to believe, that the simple and almost rude manners described by Homer, might have seduced him into coarseness both of ideas and expression, for which the studied, composed, and dignified style of the Æneid gave neither opening nor apology. That this was a fault which Dryden, with all his taste, never was able to discard, might easily be proved from various passages in his translations, where the transgression is on his own part altogether gratuitous. Such is the well-known version of

Ut possessor agelli
Diceret, hæc mea sunt, veteres migrate coloni,
Nunc victi, &c.

When the grim captain, with a surly tone,
Cries out, Pack up, ye rascals, and be gone!
Kicked out, we set the best face on't we could, &c.

In translating the most indelicate passage of Lucretius, Dryden has rather enhanced than veiled its indecency. The story of Iphis in the Metamorphoses is much more bluntly told by the English poet than by Ovid. In short, where there was a latitude given for coarseness of description and expression, Dryden has always too readily laid hold of it. The very specimen which he has given us of a version of Homer, contains many passages in which the antique Grecian simplicity is vulgarly and inelegantly rendered. The Thunderer terms Juno

My household curse, my lawful plague, the spy
Of Jove's designs, his other squinting eye.

The ambrosial feast of Olympus concludes like a tavern revel:

Drunken at last, and drowsy, they depart
Each to his house, adorned with laboured art
Of the lame architect. The thundering God,
Even he, withdrew to rest, and had his load;
His swimming head to needful sleep applied,
And Juno lay unheeded by his side.

There is reason indeed to think, that, after the Revolution, Dryden's taste was improved in this, as in some other respects. In his translation of Juvenal, for example, the satire against women, coarse as it is, is considerably refined and softened from the grossness of the Latin poet; who has, however, been lately favoured by a still more elegant, and (excepting perhaps one or two passages) an equally spirited translation, by Mr. Gifford of London. Yet, admitting this apology for Dryden as fully as we dare, from the numerous specimens of indelicacy even in his later translations, we are induced to judge it fortunate that Homer was reserved for a poet who had not known the age of Charles II.; and whose inaccuracies and injudicious decorations may be pardoned, even by the scholar, when he considers

the probability, that Dryden might have slipped into the opposite extreme, by converting rude simplicity into indecency or vulgarity. The Æneid, on the other hand, if it restrained Dryden's poetry to a correct, steady, and even flight: if it damped his energy by its regularity, and fettered his excursive imagination by the sobriety of its decorum, had the corresponding advantage of holding forth to the translator no temptation to licence, and no apology for negligence. Where the fervency of genius is required, Dryden has usually equalled his original: where peculiar elegance and exact propriety are demanded, his version may be sometimes found flat and inaccurate, but the mastering spirit of Virgil prevails, and it is never disgusting or indelicate. Of all the classical translations we can boast, none is so acceptable to the class of readers to whom the learned languages are a clasped book and a sealed fountain. And surely it is no moderate praise to say, that a work is universally pleasing to those for whose use it is principally intended, and to whom only it is absolutely indispensable.

The prose of Dryden may rank with the best in the English language. It is no less of his own formation than his versification, is equally spirited, and equally harmonious. Without the lengthened and pedantic sentences of Clarendon, it is dignified where dignity is becoming, and is lively without the accumulation of strained and absurd allusions and metaphors, which were unfortunately mistaken for wit by many of the author's contemporaries. Dryden has been accused of unnecessarily larding his style with Gallicisms. It must be owned, that, to comply probably with the humour of Charles, or from an affectation of the fashionable court dialect, the poet-laureate employed such words as *fougue*, *fraicheur*, &c., instead of the corresponding expressions in English: an affectation which does not appear in our author's later writings. But even the learned and excellent Sir David Dalrymple was led to carry this idea greatly too far. "Nothing," says that admirable antiquary, "distinguishes the genius of the English language so much as its general naturalization of foreigners. Dryden, in the reign of Charles II., printed the following words as pure French newly imported: *amour*, *billet-doux*, *caprice*, *chagrin*, *conversation*, *double-entendre*, *embarrassed*, *fatigue*, *figure*, *foible*, *gallant*, *good graces*, *grimace*, *incendiary*, *levée*, *maltreated*, *rallied*, *repartée*, *ridicule*, *tender*, *tour*; with several others which are now considered as natives.—'Marriage A-la-Mode.'" But of these words many had been long naturalized in England, and, with the adjectives derived from them, are used by Shakspeare and the dramatists of his age.* By their being printed in italics in the play

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* Shakspeare has *capricious*, *conversation*, fatigate, (if not *fatigue*,) *figure*, *gallant*, *good graces*; *incendiary* is in Minshew's "Guide to the Tongues," ed. 1627. *Tender* often occurs in Shakspeare, both as a substantive and verb. And many other of the above words may be detected by those who have time and inclination to search for them, in authors prior to Dryden's time.

of "Marriage A-la-Mode," Dryden only meant to mark, that Melantha, the affected coquette in whose mouth they are placed, was to use the French, not the vernacular pronunciation. It will admit of question, whether any single French word has been naturalized upon the sole authority of Dryden.

Although Dryden's style has nothing obsolete, we can occasionally trace a reluctance to abandon an old word or idiom; the consequence, doubtless, of his latter studies in ancient poetry. In other respects, nothing can be more elegant than the diction of the praises heaped upon his patrons, for which he might himself plead the apology he uses for Maimbourg, "who, having enemies, made himself friends by panegyrics." Of these lively critical prefaces, which, when we commence, we can never lay aside till we have finished, Dr. Johnson has said, with equal force and beauty,—"They have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled; every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little is gay, what is great is splendid. He may be thought to mention himself too frequently; but while he forces himself upon our esteem, we cannot refuse him to stand high in his own. Every thing is excused by the play of images and the sprightliness of expression. Though all is easy, nothing is feeble; though all seems careless, there is nothing harsh; and though, since his earlier works, more than a century has passed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obsolete."

"He, who writes much, will not easily escape a manner, such a recurrence of particular modes as may be easily noted. Dryden is always another and the same. He does not exhibit a second time the same elegances in the same form, nor appears to have any art other than that of expressing with clearness what he thinks with vigour. His style could not easily be imitated, either seriously or ludicrously; for, being always equable and always varied, it has no prominent or discriminative characters. The beauty, who is totally free from disproportion of parts and features, cannot be ridiculed by an overcharged resemblance."

The last paragraph is not to be understood too literally; for although Dryden never so far copied himself as to fall into what has been quaintly called *mannerism;* yet accurate observation may trace in his works, the repetition of some sentiments and illustrations from prose to verse, and back again to prose.* In his preface to the

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* The remarkable phrase, "to possess the soul in patience," occurs in the "Hind and Panther;" and in the Essay on Satire, we have nearly the same expression. The image of a bird's wing flagging in a damp atmosphere, occurs in Don Sebastian, and in prose elsewhere, though I have lost the reference. The same thought is found in the "Hind and Panther," but is not there used metaphorically:

Æneid, he has enlarged on the difficult of varying phrases, when the same sense returned on the author: and surely we must allow full praise to his fluency and command of language, when, during so long a literary career, and in the course of such a variety of miscellaneous productions, we can detect in his style so few instances of repetition, or self-imitation.

The prose of Dryden, excepting his translations, and one or two controversial tracts, is entirely dedicated to criticism, either general and didactic, or defensive and exculpatory. There, as in other branches of polite learning, it was his lot to be a light to his people. About the time of the Restoration the cultivation of letters was prosecuted in France with some energy. But the genius of that lively nation being more fitted for criticism than poetry; for drawing rules from what others have done, than for writing works which might be themselves standards; they were sooner able to produce an accurate table of laws for those intending to write epic poems and tragedies, according to the best Greek and Roman authorities, than to exhibit distinguished specimens of success in either department; just as they are said to possess the best possible rules for building ships of war, although not equally remarkable for their power of fighting them. When criticism becomes a pursuit separate from poetry, those who follow it are apt to forget, that the legitimate ends of the art for which they lay down rules, are instruction or delight, and that these points being attained, by what road soever, entitles a poet to claim the prize of successful merit. Neither did the learned authors of these disquisitions sufficiently attend to the general disposition of mankind, which cannot be contented even with the happiest imitations of former excellence, but demands novelty as a necessary ingredient for amusement. To insist that every epic poem shall have the plan of the Iliad and Æneid, and every tragedy be fettered by the rules of Aristotle, resembles the principle of an architect, who should build all his houses with the same number of windows, and of stories. It happened, too, inevitably, that the critics, in the plenipotential authority which they exercised, often assumed as indispensable requisites of the drama, or epopeia, circumstances, which, in the great authorities they quoted, were altogether accidental and indifferent. These they erected into laws, and handed down as essentials to be observed by all succeeding poets; although the forms prescribed have often as little to do with the merit and success of the originals from which they are taken, as the shape of the drinking-glass with the

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Nor need they fear the dampness of the sky
Should flag their wings, and hinder them to fly.

Dryden is ridiculed by an imitator of Rabelais, for the recurrence of the phrase by which he usually prefaces his own defensive criticism. "*If it be allowed me to speak so much in my own commendation*;—see Dryden's preface to his Fables, or any other of his works that you please."

flavour of the wine which it contains. "To these encroachments," says Fielding, after some observations to the same purpose, "time and ignorance, the two great supporters of imposture, gave authority; and thus many rules for good writing have been established, which have not the least foundation in truth or nature; and which commonly serve for no other purpose than to curb and restrain genius, in the same manner as it would have restrained the dancing-master, had the many excellent treatises on that art laid it down as an essential rule, that every man must dance in chains." It is probable, that the tyranny of the French critics, fashionable as the literature of that country was with Charles and his courtiers, would have extended itself over England at the Restoration, had not a champion so powerful as Dryden placed himself in the gap. We have mentioned in its place his "Essay on Dramatic Poetry," the first systematic piece of criticism which our literature has to exhibit. In this Essay, he was accused of entertaining private views, of defending some of his own pieces, at least of opening the door of the theatre wider, and rendering its access more easy, for his own selfish convenience. Allowing this to be true in whole, as it may be in part, we are as much obliged to Dryden for resisting the domination of Gallic criticism, as we are to the fanatics who repressed the despotism of the crown, although they buckled on their armour against white surplices, and the cross in baptism. The character which Dryden has drawn of our English dramatists in the Essay, and the various prefaces connected with it, have unequalled spirit and precision. The contrast of Ben Jonson with Shakspeare is peculiarly and strikingly felicitous. Of the latter portrait, Dr. Johnson has said, that the editors and admirers of Shakspeare, in all their emulation of reverence, cannot boast of much more than of having diffused and paraphrased this epitome of excellence, of having changed Dryden's gold for baser metal, of lower value, though of greater bulk. While Dryden examined, discussed, admitted, or rejected the rules proposed by others, he forbore, from prudence, indolence, or a regard for the freedom of Parnassus, to erect himself into a legislator. His doctrines, which chiefly respect the intrinsic qualities necessary in poetry, are scattered, without system or pretence to it, over the numerous pages of prefatory and didactic essays, with which he enriched his publications. It is impossible to read far in any of them, without finding some maxim for doing or forbearing, which every student of poetry will do well to engrave upon the tablets of his memory. But the author's mode of instruction is neither harsh nor dictatorial. When his opinion changed, as in the case of rhyming tragedies, he avows the change with candour, and we are enabled the more courageously to follow his guidance, when we perceive the readiness with which he retraces his path, if he strays into error. The gleams of philosophical spirit which so frequently illumine these pages of criticism; the lively and appropriate grace of illustration; the true and correct expression of the general propositions; the simple and unaffected passages, in which, when led to allude to his personal

labours and situation, he mingles the feelings of the man with the instructions of the critic,—unite to render Dryden's Essays the most delightful prose in the English language.

The didactic criticism of Dryden is necessarily, at least naturally, mingled with that which he was obliged to pour forth in his own defence; and this may be one main cause of its irregular and miscellaneous form. What might otherwise have resembled the extended and elevated front of a regular palace, is deformed by barriers, ramparts, and bastions of defence; by cottages, mean additions, and offices necessary for personal accommodation. The poet, always most in earnest about his immediate task, used, without ceremony, those arguments which suited his present purpose, and thereby sometimes supplied his foes with weapons to assail another quarter. It also happens frequently, if the same allusion may be continued, that Dryden defends with obstinate despair, against the assaults of his foemen, a post which, in his cooler moments, he has condemned as untenable. However easily he may yield to internal conviction, and to the progress of his own improving taste, even these concessions, he sedulously informs us, are not wrung from him by the assault of his enemies; and he often goes out of his road to show, that, though conscious he was in the wrong, he did not stand legally convicted by their arguments. To the chequered and inconsistent appearance which these circumstances have given to the criticism of Dryden, it is an additional objection, that through the same cause his studies were partial, temporary, and irregular. His mind was amply stored with acquired knowledge, much of it perhaps the fruits of early reading and application. But, while engaged in the hurry of composition, or overcome by the lassitude of continued literary labour, he seems frequently to have trusted to the tenacity of his memory, and so drawn upon this fund with injudicious liberality, without being sufficiently anxious as to accuracy of quotation, or even of assertion. If, on the other hand, he felt himself obliged to resort to more profound learning than his own, he was at little pains to arrange or digest it, or even to examine minutely the information he acquired, from hasty perusal of the books he consulted; and thus but too often poured it forth in the crude form in which he had himself received it, from the French critic, or Dutch schoolman. The scholarship, for example, displayed in the Essay on Satire, has this raw and ill-arranged appearance; and stuck, as it awkwardly is, among some of Dryden's own beautiful and original writing, gives, like a borrowed and unbecoming garment, a mean and inconsistent appearance to the whole disquisition. But these occasional imperfections and inaccuracies are marks of the haste with which Dryden was compelled to give his productions to the world, and cannot deprive him of the praise due to the earliest and most entertaining of English critics.

I have thus detailed the life, and offered some remarks on the literary character, of JOHN DRYDEN: who, educated in a pedantic taste,

and a fanatical religion, was destined, if not to give laws to the stage of England, at least to defend its liberties; to improve burlesque into satire; to free translation from the fetters of verbal metaphrase, and exclude from it the licence of paraphrase; to teach posterity the powerful and varied poetical harmony of which their language was capable: to give an example of the lyric ode of unapproached excellence; and to leave to English literature a name, second only to those of Milton and of Shakspeare.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON.

THE life of this excellent man and ingenious author has been written, with equal spirit and candour, by Mrs. Barbauld, a name long dear to elegant literature, and is prefixed to her publication of the Author's Correspondence, published by Phillips, in six volumes, in 1804. The leading circumstances of these simple annals are necessarily extracted from that performance, to which the present editor has no means of adding anything of consequence.

Samuel Richardson was born in Derbyshire, in the year 1689. His father, a joiner by profession, was one of many sons, sprung from a family of middling note, which had been so far reduced that the children were brought up to mechanical trades. His mother was also decently descended, but an orphan, left such in infancy by the death of both her parents, cut off within half-an-hour of each other by the great pestilence in 1663. Her name is not mentioned. Old Richardson was connected by employment with the unhappy Duke of Monmouth, after whose execution he retired to Shrewsbury, apprehensive, perhaps, of a fate similar to that of College, his brother in trade, well known in those times by the title of the Protestant Joiner, who was executed for high treason in the reign of Charles II.

Having sustained severe losses in trade, the elder Richardson was unable to give his son Samuel more than a very ordinary education; and our author, who was to rise so high in one department of literature, was left unacquainted with any language excepting his own. Under all these disadvantages, and perhaps in some degree owing to their existence, young Richardson very early followed, with a singular bias, the course which was most likely to render his name immortal. We give his own words, for they cannot be amended:—

"I recollect that I was early noted for having invention. I was not fond of play, as other boys; my school-fellows used to call me *Serious* and *Gravity*, and five of them particularly delighted to single me out, either for a walk, or at their fathers' houses, or at mine, to tell them stories, as they phrased it. Some I told them, from my reading, as true; others from my head, as mere invention, of which they would be most fond, and often were affected by them. One of them particularly, I remember, was for putting me to write a history, as he called it, on the model of "Tommy Potts."* I now forget what it was, only

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* Tommy Potts is the name of an old ballad published in Ritson's Ancient Songs.

that it was of a servant-man preferred by a fine young lady (for his goodness) to a lord, who was a libertine. All my stories carried with them, I am bold to say, a useful moral."*

But young Richardson found a still more congenial body of listeners among the female sex. An old lady, indeed, seems to have resented an admonitory letter, in which the future teacher of morals contrasted her pretensions to religion with her habitual indulgence in slander and backbiting; but with the young and sentimental his reception was more gracious. "As a bashful and not forward boy," he says, "I was an early favourite with all the young women of taste and reading in the neighbourhood. Half a dozen of them, when met to work with their needles, used, when they got a book they liked, and thought I should, to borrow me to read to them, their mothers sometimes with them; and both mothers and daughters used to be pleased with the observations they put me upon making. I was not more than thirteen, when three of these young women, unknown to each other, having a high opinion of my taciturnity, revealed to me their love-secrets, in order to induce me to give them copies to write after, or correct, for answers to their lovers' letters; nor did any one of them ever know that I was the secretary to the others. I have been directed to chide, and even repulse, when an offence was either taken or given, at the very time when the heart of the chider or repulser was open before me, overflowing with esteem and affection; and the fair repulser, dreading to be taken at her word, directing *this* word, or *that* expression, to be softened or changed. One, highly gratified with her lover's fervour and vows of everlasting love, has said, when I have asked her direction, I cannot tell you what to write, but (her heart on her lips) you cannot write too kindly. All her fear was only that she should incur slight for her kindness."†

His father had nourished some ambitious views of dedicating young Richardson to the ministry, but, as his circumstances denied him the means of giving him necessary education, Samuel was destined to that profession most nearly connected with literature, and was bound apprentice to Mr. John Wilde, of Stationers' Hall, in the year 1706. Industrious as well as intelligent, regulated in his habits, and diverted by no headstrong passion from the strictest course of duty, Richardson made rapid progress in his employment as a printer.

"I served," he says, "a diligent seven years to it—to a master who grudged every hour to me that tended not to his profit, even of those times of leisure and diversion which the refractoriness of my fellow-servants *obliged* him to allow them, and were usually allowed by other masters to their apprentices. I stole from the hours of rest and relaxation my reading times for improvement of my mind, and being engaged in a correspondence with a gentleman, greatly my superior in degree, and of ample fortune, who, had he lived, intended high things

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* Life of Richardson. † Ibid.

for me, those were all the opportunities I had in my apprenticeship to carry it on. But this little incident I may mention; I took care that even my candle was of my own purchasing, that I might not, in the most trifling instance, make my master a sufferer (and who used to call me the pillar of his house), and not to disable myself by watching or sitting up, to perform my duty to him in the daytime."*

The correspondence betwixt Richardson and the gentleman who had so well selected an object of patronage was voluminous; but at the untimely death of his friend, it was, by his particular desire, consigned to the flames.

Several years more were spent in the obscure drudgery of the printing-house ere Richardson took out his freedom, and set up as a master printer. His talents for literature were soon discovered; and, in addition to his proper business, he used to oblige the booksellers, by furnishing them with prefaces, dedications, and such like garnishing of the works submitted to his press. He printed several of the popular periodical papers of the day, and at length, through the interest of Mr. Onslow, the Speaker, obtained the lucrative employment of printing the Journals of the House of Commons, by which he must have reaped considerable advantages, although he occasionally had to complain of delay of payment on the part of government.

Punctual in his engagements, and careful in the superintendence of his business, fortune, and respect, its sure accompaniment, began to flow in upon Richardson. In 1754 he was chosen Master of the Stationers' Company, and in 1760 he purchased a moiety of the patent of printer to the King, which seems to have added considerably to his revenue. He was now a man in very easy circumstances; and, besides his premises in Salisbury Court, he enjoyed the luxury of a villa, first at North End, near Hammersmith, afterwards at Parsons Green.

Richardson was twice married, first to Allington Wilde, his master's daughter, and after her death, in 1731, to the sister of James Leake, bookseller, who survived her distinguished husband. He has made a feeling commemoration of the family misfortunes which he sustained, in a letter to Lady Bradshaigh. "I told you, madam, that I have been married twice—both times happily; you will guess so, as to my first, when I tell you that I cherish the memory of my lost wife to this hour; and as to the second, when I assure you that I can do so without derogating from the merits of, or being disallowed by, my present, who speaks of her on all occasions as respectfully and affectionately as I do myself.

"By my first wife I had five sons and one daughter, some of them living to be delightful prattlers, with all the appearances of sound health, lively in their features, and promising as to their minds; and the death of one of them, I doubt, accelerating, from grief, that of the

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* Life of Richardson.

otherwise laudably afflicted mother. I have had, by my present wife, five girls and one boy; I have buried of these the promising boy and one girl. Four girls I have living, all at present very good, their mother a true and instructing mother to them.

"Thus have I lost six sons (all my sons) and two daughters, every one of which, to answer your question, I parted with with the utmost regret. Other heavy deprivations of friends, very near and very dear, have I also suffered. I am very susceptible, I will venture to say, of impressions of this nature. A father, an honest, worthy father, I lost by the accident of a broken thigh, snapped by a sudden jerk, endeavouring to recover a slip passing through his own yard. My father, whom I attended in every stage of his last illness, I long mourned for. Two brothers, very dear to me, I lost abroad. A friend, more valuable than most brothers, was taken from me. No less than eleven affecting deaths in two years! My nerves were so affected with these repeated blows, that I have been forced, after trying the whole *materia medica*, and consulting many physicians, as the only palliative (not a remedy to be expected), to go into a regimen, and, for seven years past, have I forborne wine and flesh and fish; and, at this time, I and all my family are in mourning for a good sister, with whom neither I would have parted, could I have had my choice. From these affecting dispensations, will you not allow me, madam, to remind an unthinking world, immersed in pleasures, what a life this is that they are so fond of, and to arm them against the affecting changes of it?"*

But this amiable and excellent man was not deprived of the most pleasing exercise of his affections, notwithstanding the breaches which had been made among his offspring. Four daughters survived to render those duties which the affectionate temper of their father rendered peculiarly precious to him. Mary was married during her father's lifetime to Mr. Ditcher, a respectable surgeon at Bath. His daughter Martha, who had been his principal amanuensis, became, after his decease, the wife of Edward Bridgen, Esq.; and Sarah married Mr. Crowther, surgeon, in Boswell's Court. Anne, a woman of a most amiable disposition, but whose weak health had often alarmed the affections of her parents, survived, nevertheless, her sisters, as well as her parents. A nephew of Richardson's paid him, in his declining years, the duties of a son, and assisted him in the conducting of his business, which concludes all it is necessary to say concerning the descendants and connexions of this distinguished author.

The private life of Richardson has nothing to detain the biographer. We have mentioned the successive opportunities, which, cautiously yet ably improved, led him to eminence in his highly respectable profession, by that slow but secure progress which has nothing in it to

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* Life of Richardson.

arrest attention or to gratify curiosity. He was unceasingly industrious; led astray by no idle views of speculation, and seduced by no temptations to premature expenditure. Industry brought independence, and, finally, wealth in its train; and that well-won fortune was husbanded with prudence, and expended with liberality. A kind and generous master, he was eager to encourage his servants to persevere in the same course of patient labour by which he had himself attained fortune; and it is said to have been his common practice to hide half-a-crown among the types, that it might reward the diligence of the workman who should first be in the office in the morning. His hospitality was of the most liberal, as well as the most judicious kind. One of his correspondents describes him as sitting at his door like an old patriarch, and inviting all who passed by to enter, and be refreshed; and this, says Mrs. Barbauld, "whether they brought with them the means of amusing their host, or only required his kind notice and that of his family." He was generous and benevolent to distressed authors, a class of men with whom his profession brought him into contact; and had occasion, more than once, to succour Dr. Johnson during his days of poverty, and to assist his efforts to force himself into public notice. The domestic revolutions of his life, after mentioning the losses he had sustained in his family, may be almost summed up in two great events. He changed his villa, in which he indulged, like other wealthy citizens, from North End to Parsons Green; and his printing establishment, from the one side of Salisbury Court to the other; which last alteration, he complains, did not meet Mrs. Richardson's approbation.

If we look yet closer into Richardson's private life (and who loves not to know the slightest particulars concerning a man of his genius?) we find so much to praise, and so very little deserving censure, that we almost think we are reading the description of one of the amiable characters he has drawn in his own works. A love of the human species; a desire to create happiness and to witness it; a life undisturbed by passion, and spent in doing good; pleasures which centred in elegant conversation, in bountiful hospitality, in the exchange of all the kindly intercourse of life,—marked the worth and unsophisticated simplicity of the good man's character. He loved children, and knew the rare art of winning their attachment; for, partaking in that respect the sagacity of the canine race, they are not to be deceived by dissembled attention. A lady, who shared the hospitality of Richardson, and gives an excellent account of the internal regulations of his virtuous and orderly family, remembers creeping to his knee and hanging on his words, as well as the good-nature with which he backed her petitions, to be permitted to remain a little longer when she was summoned to bed, and his becoming her guarantee, that she would not require the servant's assistance to put her to bed, and to extinguish the candle. Trifling as these reflections may seem, they are pleasing proofs that the author of "Clarissa" was, in private life, the mild good man which we wish to suppose him.

The predominant failing of Richardson seems certainly to have been vanity; vanity naturally excited by his great and unparalleled popularity at home and abroad, and by the continual and concentred admiration of the circle in which he lived. Such a weakness finds root in the mind of every one who has obtained general applause, but Richardson, the gentleness of whose mind was almost feminine, was peculiarly susceptible of this feminine weakness, and he fostered and indulged its growth, which a man of firmer character would have crushed and restrained. The cup of Circe converted men into beasts; and that of praise, when deeply and eagerly drained, seldom fails to make wise men in some degree fools. There seems to have been a want of masculine firmness in Richardson's habits of thinking, which combined with his natural tenderness of heart in inducing him to prefer the society of women; and women, from the quickness of their feelings, as well as their natural desire to please, are always the admirers, or rather the idolaters, of genius, and generally its willing flatterers. Richardson was in the daily habit of seeing, conversing, and corresponding with many of the fair sex; and the unvaried, and, it would seem, the inexhaustible theme, was his own writings. Hence, Johnson, whose lofty pride never suffered him to cherish the meaner foible of vanity, has passed upon Richardson, after a just tribute to his worth, the severe sentence recorded by Boswell:—"I only remember," says the biographer, "that Johnson expressed a high value for his talents and virtues: but that his perpetual study was to ward off petty inconveniences, and to procure petty pleasures; that his love of continual superiority was such, that he took care always to be surrounded by women, who listened to him implicitly, and did not venture to contradict his opinions; and that his desire of distinction was so great that he used to give large vails to Speaker Onslow's servants, that they might treat him with respect."* An anecdote, which seems to confirm Johnson's statement, is given by Boswell, on authority of a lady who was present when the circumstance took place. A gentleman, who had lately been at Paris, sought, while in a large company at Richardson's villa at North End, to gratify the landlord, by informing him that he had seen his "Clarissa" lying on the king's brother's table. Richardson observing that a part of the company were engaged in conversation apart, affected not to hear what had been said, but took advantage of the first general pause to address the gentleman with—"Sir, I think you were saying something about"—and then stopped, in a flutter of expectation; which his guest mortified, by replying, "A mere trifle, sir, not worth repeating."†

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* Life of Richardson.—This character was given at the house of a venerable Scottish judge now no more, who was so great an admirer of "Sir Charles Grandison," that he was said to have read that work over once every year in the course of his life.

† Johnson himself felt pride on finding his Dictionary in Lord Scarsdale's dressing-room, and pointed it out to his friend, with the classical quotation, *Quæ*

The truth seems to be, that Richardson, by nature shy, and of a nervous constitution, limited also by a very narrow education, cared not to encounter in conversation with those rougher spirits of the age, where criticism might have had too much severity in it. And he seems to have been reserved even in the presence of Johnson, though bound to him by obligation, and although that mighty aristarch professed to have the talent of "making him rear," and of calling forth his powers. Nor does he appear to have associated much with any of the distinguished geniuses of the age, saving Dr. Young, with whom he corresponded late in life. Aaron Hill, who patriotically endeavoured to make him a convert to wines of British mænufacture; and Mr. Edwards, author of the "Canons of Criticism," though both clever men, do not deserve to be mentioned as exceptions.

The society of Richardson was limited to a little circle of amiable and accomplished persons, who were contented to allow a central position to the author of "Clarissa," and to revolve around him in inferior orbits. The families of Highmore and Duncombe produced more than one individual of this description; and besides Mrs. Donellan, and the Miss Fieldings, whom Richardson loved, notwithstanding the offences of their brother, there was a Miss Mulso, Miss Westcombe, and other ladies besides, full of veneration for the kind instructor, whom they were permitted to term their adopted father. Mrs. Charlotte Lennox was also a regular visitor at Parsons Green, and scarce could remember a visit in which her host had not rehearsed at least one, but probably two or three, voluminous letters, if he found her in the humour of listening with attention.

While "Clarissa" and "Sir Charles Grandison" were in progress, Richardson used to read a part of his labours to some of this chosen circle every morning, and receive, it may readily be supposed, a liberal tribute of praise, with a very moderate portion of criticism. Miss Highmore, who inherited a paternal taste for painting, has recorded one of those scenes in a small drawing, where Richardson, in a morning gown and cap, is introduced reading the manuscript of "Sir Charles Grandison" to such a little group.

This was all very amiable, though perhaps bordering on an effeminate love of flattery and applause; but it must be owned that our author disdained not flattery from less pure hands than those of his ordinary companions. We will not dwell upon poor Lætitia Pilkington, whose wants, rather than her extravagant praises, may be supposed to have conciliated the kindness of Richardson, notwithstanding the infamy of her character; but we are rather scandalized that the veteran iniquity of old Cibber should not have excluded him from the intimacy of the virtuous Richardson, and that the grey profligate

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terra nostri non plena laboris. Yet, under correction of both these great authors the more substantial fame is to find a popular work, not in the closet of the great, who buy every book which bears a name, but in the cabinets of the poor, who must have made some sacrifice to effect the purchase.

could render himself acceptable to the author of Sir Charles Grandison by such effusions of vulgar vivacity as the following, which we cannot forbear inserting:—"I have just finished the sheets you favoured me with; but never found so strong a proof of your sly ill-nature, as to have hung me up upon tenters till I see you again. Z—ds! I have not patience, till I know what's become of her. Why, you! I don't know what to call you!—Ah! ah! you may laugh if you please: but how will you be able to look me in the face, if the lady should ever be able to show *hers* again? What piteous, d—d, disgraceful pickle have you plunged her in? For God's sake send me the sequel; or—I don't know what to say!"* Yet another delectable quotation from the letters of that merry old good-for-nothing, which, as addressed by a rake of the theatre to the most sentimental author of the age, and as referring to one of his favourite and most perfect characters, is, in its way, a matchless specimen of elegant vivacity. "The delicious meal I made of Miss Byron on Sunday last, has given me an appetite for another slice of her, off from the spit, before she is served up to the public table; if about five o'clock to-morrow afternoon will not be inconvenient, Mrs. Brown and I will come and piddle upon a bit more of her: but pray let your whole family, with Mrs. Richardson at the head of them, come in for their share."

An appetite for praise, and an over-indulgence of that appetite, not only teaches an author to be gratified with the applause of the unworthy, and to prefer it to the censure of the wise, but it leads to the less pardonable error of begrudging others their due share of public favour. Richardson was too good, too kind a man to let literary envy settle deep in his bosom, yet an overweening sense of his own importance seems to have prevented his doing entire justice to the claims of those who might be termed his rivals. He appears to have been rather too prone to believe ill of those authors, against whose works exceptions, in point of delicacy, might justly be taken. He has inserted in his Correspondence an account of Swift's earlier life, highly injurious to the character of that eminent writer, and which the industry of Dr. Barrett has since shown to be a gross misrepresentation. The same tone of feeling has made him denounce, with the utmost severity, the indecorum of "Tristram Shandy," without that tribute of applause which, in every view of the case, was so justly due to the genius of the author, and which would have come with particular propriety from Richardson, himself a master of the pathetic style of composition. Richardson seems also to have joined Aaron Hill in the cuckoo-song, that Pope had written himself out;—and, finally, the dislike which he manifests towards Fielding, though it originated in a gratuitous insult on the part of the latter, breaks out too often, and is too anxiously veiled under an affectation of charity and candour, not to lead us to suspect that the author of "Tom Jones"

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* Correspondence of Richardson.

was at least as obnoxious to Richardson through the success, as from the alleged immorality, of his productions. It would have been generous in the wealthier and happier of these competitors for public fame, to have reflected that, while his own bark lay safe in harbour, or was wafted on by the favouring gale of applause, his less fortunate rival had to struggle with the current and the storm. But as this disagreeable subject will be found canvassed in Fielding's Life, we will not farther dwell on it here. Of all pictures of literary life, that which exhibits two men, of transcendent, though different talents, engaged in the depreciation of each other, is most humbling to human nature, most unpleasing to a candid and enlightened reader. Excepting against Fielding, Richardson seems to have nourished no positive literary feud. But it is to be regretted that, in his Correspondence, we find few traces that he either loved or admired contemporary genius.

It may appear invidious to dwell thus long on a sufficiently venial speck in a character so fair and amiable. But it is no useless lesson to show, that a love of praise, and a feeling of literary emulation, not to say vanity, foibles pardonable in themselves, and rarely separated from the poetical temperament, lead to consequences detrimental to the deserved reputation of the most ingenious author, and the most worthy man, as a dead fly will pollute the most precious unguent. Every author, but especially those who cultivate the lighter kinds of literature, should teach themselves the stern lesson, that their art must fall under the frequent censure, *Non est tanti;* and, for this reason, they should avoid, as they would the circle of Alcina, that sort of society who so willingly form around every popular writer an atmosphere of assentation and flattery, and represent his labours as a matter of great consequence to the world, and his popularity as a matter to be defended on all occasions and against all rivals.

Dismissing these considerations, we cannot omit to state, that Richardson's correspondence with one of his most intelligent and enthusiastic admirers, commenced, and was for some time carried on, in a manner which might have formed a pleasing incident in one of the author's own romances. This was Lady Bradshaigh, the wife of Sir Roger Bradshaigh, of Haigh, in Lancashire, whose very considerable talent, and ardent taste for literature, had to contend with the prejudices which in those days seem to have rendered it ridiculous for a lady of rank and fashion, the wife of a country gentleman of estate and consideration, to enter into correspondence with a professed author. To gratify the strong propensity she felt to engage in literary intercourse with an author of Richardson's distinction, Lady Bradshaigh had recourse to the romantic expedient of commencing the correspondence with him under an assumed name. Thus, with all the precautions against discovery which are sometimes resorted to for less honest purposes, Richardson and his *incognita* maintained a close exchange of letters, until they seem on both sides to have grown desirous of becoming personally known to each other; and the author

was induced to walk in the Park at a particular hour, and to send an accurate description of his person, that his fair correspondent might be able, herself unknown, to distinguish him from the vulgar herd of passengers. The following portrait exhibits all the graphical accuracy with which the author was accustomed to detail the appearance of his imaginary personages, and is at the same time very valuable, as it describes the external appearance of a man of genius, in whom great powers of observing life and manners were combined with bashful and retired habits.

"I go through the Park," says Richardson, "once or twice a week to my little retirement, but I will, for a week together, be in it every day three or four hours, at your command, till you tell me you have seen a person who answers to this description, namely, short, rather plump than emaciated, notwithstanding his complaints; about five foot five inches; fair wig; lightish cloth coat, all black besides; one hand generally in his bosom, the other a cane in it, which he leans upon under the skirts of his coat usually, that it may imperceptibly serve him as a support when attacked by sudden tremors or startings and dizziness, which too frequently attack him, but, thank God, not so often as formerly; looking directly fore-right, as passers-by would imagine, but observing all that stirs on either hand of him without moving his short neck; hardly ever turning back; of a light brown complexion; teeth not yet failing him; smoothish-faced and ruddy-cheeked: at sometimes looking to be about sixty-five, at other times much younger; a regular even pace, stealing away ground, rather than seeming to rid it: a grey eye, too often overclouded by mistiness from the head; by chance lively; very lively it will be if he have hope of seeing a lady whom he loves and honours; his eye always on the ladies; if they have very large hoops he looks down and supercilious, and, as if he would be thought wise, but perhaps the sillier for that as he approaches a lady his eye is never fixed first upon her face, but upon her feet, and thence he raises it up, pretty quickly for a dull eye; and one would think (if we thought him at all worthy of observation), that from her air and (the last beheld) her face, he sets her down in his mind as *so* or *so*, and then passes on to the next object he meets; only then looking back, if he greatly likes or dislikes, as if he would see if the lady appear to be all of apiece, in the one light or in the other. Are these marks distinct enough, if you are resolved to keep all the advantages you set out with? And from this odd, this grotesque figure, think you, madam, that you have anything to apprehend? anything that will not rather promote than check your mirth? I dare be bold to say (and allow it too) that you would rather see this figure than any other you ever saw whenever you should find yourself graver than you wish to be."*

Lady Bradshaigh, like other ladies upon similar occasions, could not

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* Correspondence of Richardson.

resist the opportunity of exercising a little capricious tyranny. Richardson's walks in the Park were for some time unnoticed. Both parties seem to have indulged in a gentle coquetry, until both were likely to lose temper, and the complaints on the gentleman's side became a little keen and eager. At length Lady Bradshaigh dropped the masque, and continued afterwards to be in her own person the valued correspondent of the author. It is but justice to say that the sense and spirit with which she supports her own views, even when contrary to those of Richardson, render her letters the most agreeable in the collection, and constitute a great difference betwixt her and some others of the author's female correspondents, who are satisfied with becoming the echoes of his sentiments and opinions. Lady Bradshaigh had a sister, Lady Echlin, who also corresponded with Richardson, but although she appears to have been an excellent woman, her letters want both the vivacity and talent displayed in those of Lady Bradshaigh. Yet Lady Echlin, too, had her moments of ambitious criticism. She even tried her hand at reforming Lovelace, as Mrs. Barbauld informs us, by the aid of a Dr. Christian, a consummation, as the reader will anticipate, much better meant than successfully executed.

Neither the admiration of the public, the applause of admirers, nor the deserved affection of his friends and family, could screen this amiable author from his share in the lot of humanity. Besides his family misfortunes, Richardson was afflicted with indifferent health in the painful shape of nervous disorders. Sedentary habits and close attention to business had rendered a constitution delicate which nature had never made strong; and it will readily be believed that the workings of an imagination, constantly labouring in the fields of fiction, increased, rather than relieved, complaints which affected his nerves at an early period. If, as he somewhere says, he made the distress of his characters his own, and wept for Clarissa and Clementina as if they had not been the creatures of his own fancy, the exhaustion of his spirits must have exasperated his malady. His nerves were latterly so much shaken that he could not convey a glass of wine to his mouth unless it was put into a large tumbler; and becoming unable to undergo the fatigue of communicating with the principal superintendent of his business, who chanced unluckily to be hard of hearing, all communication between them was maintained by means of writing. He did not long survive the space assigned by the Psalmist as the ordinary duration of human life. On the 4th July, 1761, Samuel Richardson died, aged seventy-two, and was buried, according to his own directions, beside his first wife, in the middle aisle of St. Bride's Church, followed by the affectionate grief of those who were admitted to his society, and the sorrow of all who mourned over talents uniformly and conscientiously dedicated to the service of virtue. The following epitaph was written by his learned friend, Mrs. Carter, but is not, we believe, inscribed on his tomb:—

If ever warm benevolence was dear,
If ever wisdom gained esteem sincere,
Or genuine fancy deep attention won,
Approach with awe the dust—of Richardson.
What though his muse, through distant regions known,
Might scorn the tribute of this humble stone;
Yet pleasing to his gentle shade, must prove
The meanest pledge of Friendship, and of Love;
For oft will these, from venal throngs exiled,
And oft will innocence, of aspect mild,
And white-robed Charity, with streaming eyes,
Frequent the cloister where their patron lies.
This, reader, learn; and learn from one whose woe
Bids her wild verse in artless accents flow:
For, could she frame her numbers to commend
The husband, father, citizen, and friend;
How would her muse display, in equal strain,
The critic's judgment, and the writer's vein!
Ah, no! expect not from the chiselled stone
The praise, graven on our hearts alone.
There shall his fame a lasting shrine acquire;
And ever shall his moving page inspire
Pure truth, fixt honour, virtue's pleasing lore;
While taste and science crown this favoured shore.*

Richardson's character as a man, after all deductions have been made for circumstances and for human frailty, cannot be too highly estimated. It remains only to consider him as an author, and, for this purpose, to review his literary career, and the productions which it gave rise to.

It was by mere accident that Richardson appears to have struck out the line of composition so peculiarly adapted to his genius. He had at all times the pen of a ready correspondent, and, from his early age, had, as we have seen, been accustomed to lend it to others, and to write, of course, under different characters from his own. There can be no doubt that, in the service of the young women who employed him as their amanuensis and confidant, this natural talent must have been considerably improved, and as little that the exercise of such a power was pleasing to the possessor. Chance at length occasioned its being employed in the service of the public. The account will be best given in the words of his own letter to Aaron Hill, who, in common with the public at large, had become pressingly anxious to know if there was any foundation in fact for the history of Pamela.

"I will now write to your question—Whether there was any original groundwork of fact for the general foundation of Pamela's story.

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* Life of Richardson.

"About twenty-five years ago, a gentleman with whom I was intimately acquainted, but who, alas! is now no more! met with such a story as that of Pamela, in one of the summer tours which he used to take for his pleasure, attended with one servant only. At every inn he put up at, it was his way to inquire after curiosities in its neighbourhood, either ancient or modern; and particularly he asked who was the owner of a fine house, as it seemed to him, beautifully situated, which he had passed by (describing it), within a mile or two of the inn.

"It was a fine house, the landlord said. The owner was Mr. B——, a gentleman of large estate in more counties than one. That his and his lady's history engaged the attention of everybody who came that way, and put a stop to all other inquiries, though the house and gardens were well worth seeing. The lady, he said, was one of the greatest beauties in England; but the qualities of her mind had no equal: beneficent, prudent, and equally beloved and admired by high and low. That she had been taken at twelve years of age, for the sweetness of her manners and modesty, and for an understanding above her years, by Mr. B——'s mother, a truly worthy lady, to wait on her person. Her parents, ruined by suretyships, were remarkably honest and pious, and had instilled into their daughter's mind the best principles. When their misfortunes happened first, they attempted a little school in their village, where they were much beloved; he teaching writing and the first rules of arithmetic to boys; his wife plain needlework tc girls, and to knit and spin; but that it answered not: and, when the lady took their child, the industrious man earned his bread by day labour, and the lowest kind of husbandry.

"That the girl, improving daily in beauty, modesty, and genteel and good behaviour, by the time she was fifteen, engaged the attention of her lady's son, a young gentleman of free principles, who, on her lady's death, attempted, by all manner of temptations and devices, to seduce her. That she had recourse to as many innocent stratagems to escape the snares laid for her virtue; once, however, in despair, having been near drowning; that, at last, her noble resistance, watchfulness, and excellent qualities, subdued him, and he thought fit to make her his wife. That she behaved herself with so much dignity, sweetness, and humility, that she made herself beloved of everybody, and even by his relations, who at first despised her; and now had the blessings of both rich and poor, and the love of her husband.

"The gentleman who told me this, added, that he had the curiosity to stay in the neighbourhood from Friday to Sunday, that he might see this happy couple at church, from which they never absented themselves: that, in short, he did see them; that her deportment was all sweetness, ease, and dignity mingled; that he never saw a lovelier woman: that her husband was as fine a man, and seemed even proud of his choice; and that she attracted the respects of the persons of rank present, and had the blessings of the poor. The relator of the story told me all this with transport.

"This, sir, was the foundation of Pamela's story; but little did I think to make a story of it for the press. That was owing to this occasion.

"Mr. Rivington and Mr. Osborne, whese names are on the title-page, had long been urging me to give them a little book (which, they said, they were often asked after) of familiar letters on the useful concerns in common life: and, at last, I yielded to their opportunity, and began to recollect such subjects as I thought would be useful in such a design, and formed several letters accordingly. And, among the rest, I thought of giving one or two as cautions to young folks circumstanced as Pamela was. Little did I think, at first, of making one, much less two volumes of it. But, when I began to recollect what had, so many years before been told me by my friend, I thought the story, if written in an easy and natural manner, suitable to the simplicity of it, might possibly introduce a new species of writing, that might possibly turn young people into a course of reading different from the pomp and parade of romance-writing, and dismissing the improbable and marvellous, with which novels generally abound, might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue. I therefore gave way to enlargement; and so Pamela became as you see her. But so little did I hope for the approbation of judges, that I had not the courage to send the two volumes to your ladies, until I found the books well received by the public.

"While I was writing the two volumes, my worthy-hearted wife, and the young lady who is with us, when I had read them some part of the story, which I had begun without their knowing it, used to come into my little closet every night, with—'Have you any more of Pamela, Mr. R.? We are come to hear a little more of Pamela,' &c. This encouraged me to prosecute it, which I did so diligently, through all my other business, that, by a memorandum on my copy, I began it Nov. 10, 1739, and finished it Jan. 10, 1739-40. And I have often, censurable as I might be thought for my vanity for it, and lessening to the taste of my two female friends, had the story of Molière's "Old Woman" in my thoughts upon the occasion.

"If justly low were my thoughts of this little history, you will wonder how it came by such an assuming and very impudent preface. It was thus:—The approbation of these two female friends, and of two more, who were so kind as to give me prefaces for it, but which were much too long and circumstantial, as I thought, made me resolve myself on writing a preface; I therefore, spirited by the good opinion of these four, and knowing that the judgments of nine parts in ten of readers were but in hanging-sleeves, struck a bold stroke in the preface you see, having the umbrage of the editor's character* to screen myself behind. And thus, sir, all is out."†

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* Under the character of the Editor, he gave great commendations to the letters for which he was blamed by some of his friends.

† Life of Richardson.

"Pamela," of which the reader has thus learned the origin, appeared in 1740, and made a most powerful sensation in the public. Hitherto, romances had been written, generally speaking, in the old French taste, containing the protracted amours of princes and princesses, told in language coldly extravagant, and metaphysically absurd. In these wearisome performances, there appeared not the most distant allusion to the ordinary tone of feeling, the slightest attempt to paint mankind as it exists in the ordinary walks of life—all was rant and bombast, stilt and buskin. It will be Richardson's eternal praise, did he merit no more, that he tore from his personages those painted vizors, which concealed, under a clumsy and affected disguise, everything like the natural lineaments of the human countenance, and placed them before us barefaced, in all the actual changes of feature and complexion, and all the light and shade of human passion. It requires a reader to be in some degree acquainted with the huge folios of inanity, over which our ancestors yawned themselves to sleep, ere he can estimate the delight they must have experienced from this unexpected return to truth and nature.

The simplicity of Richardson's tale aided the effect of surprise. An innocent young woman, whose virtue a dissolute master assails by violence, as well as all the milder means of seduction, conquers him at last, by persevering in the paths of rectitude; and is rewarded, by being raised to the station of his wife, the lawful participator in his rank and fortune. Such is the simple story by which the world was so much surprised and affected.

The judicious criticism of Mrs. Barbauld has pointed out, that the character of Pamela is far from attaining a heroic cast of excellence. On the contrary, there is a strain of cold-blooded prudence which runs through all the latter part of the novel, to which we are obliged almost to deny the name of virtue. She appears originally to have had no love for Mr. B——; no passion to combat in her own bosom; no treachery to subdue in the garrison while the enemy was before the walls. Richardson voluntarily evaded giving this colouring to his tale, because it was intended more for edification than for effect; and because the example of a *soubrette* falling desperately in love with a handsome young master, might have been imitated by many in that rank of life, who could not have defended themselves exactly like Pamela against the object of so dangerous a passion. Besides, Richardson was upon principle unwilling to exhibit his favoured characters as greatly subject to violent passion of any kind, and was much disposed to dethrone Cupid, whom romance-writers had installed as the literal sovereign of gods and men. Still, the character of Pamela is somewhat sunk by the eager gratitude with which she accepts the hand of a tyrannical and cruel master, when he could not at a cheaper rate make himself master of her person. There is a parade of generosity on his side, and a humiliating degree of creeping submission on hers, which the case by no means calls for, and unless, like her namesake in Pope's Satire, Pamela could console herself with the "gilt chariot and the Flanders

mares," we should have thought her more likely to be happy as the humble wife of poor Mr. Williams, of whose honest affection she makes somewhat too politic a use in the course of her trials, and whom she discards too coolly when better prospects seem to open upon her.

It is, perhaps, invidious to enter too closely upon the general tendency of a work of entertainment. But when the admirers of "Pamela" challenged for that work the merit of doing more good than twenty sermons, we demur to the motion. Its good effects must of course have operation among young women in circumstances somewhat similar to those of the heroine; and, in that rank, it may be questioned, whether the example is not as well calculated to encourage a spirit of rash enterprise, as of virtuous resistance. If Pamela became Esquire B——'s lady, it was only on account of her virtuous resistance to his criminal attacks; but it may occur to a humble maiden (and the case we believe is not hypothetical), that to merit Pamela's reward, she must go through Pamela's trials; and that there can be no great harm in affording some encouragement to the assailant. We need not add how dangerous this experiment must be for both parties.

But we have elsewhere intimated an opinion, that the direct and obvious moral to be deduced from a fictitious narrative, is of much less consequence to the public, than the mode in which the story is treated in the course of its details. If the author introduces scenes which excite evil passions, if he familiarizes the mind of the readers with impure ideas, or sophisticates their understanding with false views of morality, it will be an unavailing defence, that, in the end of his book, he has represented virtue as triumphant. In the same manner, although some objections may be made to the deductions which the author desired and expected should be drawn from the story of "Pamela," yet the pure and honest character of the English maiden is so well maintained during the work; her sorrows and afflictions are borne with so much meekness; her little intervals of hope or comparative tranquillity break in on her troubles so much like the specks of blue sky through a cloudy atmosphere, that the whole recollection is soothing, tranquillizing, and doubtless edifying. We think little of Mr. B——, his character, or his motives, and are only delighted with the preferment of our favourite, because it seems to give so much satisfaction to herself. The pathetic passage, in which she describes her ineffectual attempt to escape, may be selected, among many, as an example of the beautiful propriety and truth with which the author was able to throw himself into the character of his heroine, and to think and reason, and express those thoughts and reasons, exactly as she must have done had the fictitious incident really befallen such a person.

The inferior persons are sketched with great truth, and may be considered as a group of English portraits of the period. In particular, the characters of the father and mother, old Andrews and his wife, are, like that of Pamela herself, in the very best style of drawing and colouring; and the interview of the former with his landlord, when he

inquires after the fate of his daughter, would have immortalized Richardson had he never wrote another line.

It may be here observed, that, had the author lived in the present day, he would probably have thrown into the character of the deeply-injured peasant a spirit of manly indignation, which the occasion demanded. But in Richardson's time, the bonds of subordination in society were drawn very strictly, and he himself appears to have had high and exaggerated ideas of the importance of wealth and rank, as well as of domestic authority of every kind. Mr. B—— does not seem to have incurred any severe censure among his neighbours for the villanies which he practises upon Pamela; she herself supposes them more than atoned for by his condescension in wedding her, and consents to receive into favour even the unwomanly and infamous Mrs. Jewkes, because the old procuress had acted a part she should have been hanged for, at the command, forsooth, of a generous master. There is want of taste in this humiliation; and a touch of spirit upon the occasion would not have misbecome even the all-forgiving Pamela.

Notwithstanding such defects, which, in fact, only occur to us upon a critical perusal, the pleasing simplicity of a tale so true to nature commanded the general and enthusiastic applause of the public. It was in vain that the mischievous wit of Fielding found a source for ridicule in that very simplicity of moral and of incident, and gave the world "Joseph Andrews," an avowed parody upon the "Pamela" of Richardson. It chanced with that very humorous performance as with the "Shepherd's Week" of Gay, that readers lost sight altogether of the satirical purpose with which it was written, and were delighted with it on account of its own intrinsic merit. We may be permitted to regret, therefore, the tone of mind with which Fielding composed a work, in professed ridicule of such genius as that of Richardson; but how can we wish that undone, without which Parson Adams would not have existed?

The success of "Pamela" induced some wretched imitator to carry on the story in a continuation, entitled "Pamela in High Life." This intrusion provoked Richardson to a similar attempt, in which he represents Pamela's husband as reclaimed from the prosecution of a guilty intrigue by the patient sorrows of his virtuous wife. The work met with the usual fate of continuations, and has been always justly accounted an unnatural and unnecessary appendage to a tale so complete within itself as the first part of "Pamela."

Eight years after the appearance of "Pamela," Richardson published "Clarissa," the work on which his fame as a classic of England will rest for ever. The tale, like that of its predecessor, is very simple: but the scene is laid in a higher rank of life, the characters are drawn with a bolder pencil, and the whole accompaniments are of a far loftier mood.

Clarissa, a character as nearly approaching to perfection as the pencil of the author could draw, is persecuted by a tyrannical father

and brother, an envious sister, and the other members of a family, who devoted everything to its aggrandizement, in order to compel her to marry a very disagreeable suitor. These intrigues and distresses she communicates, in a series of letters, to her friend Miss Howe, a young lady of an ardent, impetuous disposition, and an enthusiast in friendship. After a series of sufferings, rising almost beyond endurance, Clarissa is tempted to throw herself upon the protection of her admirer Lovelace, a character, in painting whom Richardson has exerted his utmost skill, until he has attained the very difficult and critical point, of rendering every reader pleased with his wit and abilities, even while detesting the villany of his conduct. Lovelace is represented as having devoted his life and his talents to the subversion of female virtue; and not even the charms of Clarissa, or the generosity due to her unprotected situation, can reconcile him to the idea of marriage. This species of perverted Quixotry is not much understood in the present age, when a modern voluptuary seeks the gratification of his passions where it is most easily obtained, and is seldom at the trouble of assault, when there is any probability of the fortress being resolutely defended. But in former days, when men, like Lord Baltimore, were found, at the risk of life itself, capable of employing the most violent means for the ruin of innocence, a character approaching that of Lovelace was not perhaps so unnatural. That he should have been so successful in previous amours, is not very probable; and, as Mrs. Barbauld justly observes, he was more likely to have been run through the body long before ever he saw Colonel Morden. But some exaggeration must be allowed to the author of a romance; and considering the part which Lovelace had to perform, it was necessary that his character should be highly coloured. This perfidious lover, actuated, it would seem, as much by the love of intrigue and of enterprise, as by his desire to humble the Harlowe family, and lower the pride of this their beloved daughter, whose attachment to him was not of the devoted character which he conceived was due to his merits, forms a villanous scheme for the destruction of her virtue. Without the least regard for the character of a woman, whom he always seems to have intended for his wife at some future period, he contrives to lodge her with the keeper of a common brothel, and to place around her the inmates of such a place. At length, every effort to accomplish his guilty purpose having failed, he administers opiates, and violates the person of his victim while under their influence. But he obtains nothing by his crime, save infamy and remorse. The lady dies of a broken heart, and he himself falls by the sword of one of her kinsmen.

It cannot be denied, that this story is attended with many improbabilities. Allowing for Lovelace's very peculiar character, admitting that his selfishness, his pride, and his love of intrigue, had hardened his heart to all consequences, surrounded it, as he himself says, "with flint and callus," and induced him to prefer a crooked and most foul path to one which was fair and honourable, there is no excuse for his correspondent Belford, as a man and a gentleman, keeping his friend's

infamous secret. Nay, we are apt to blame Clarissa herself, who, in her escape to Hampstead, did not place herself under the guardianship of a magistrate. We will venture to say, that Justice Fielding would have afforded her his most effectual protection: and that if Tomlinson, the false Miss Montague, or any other of Lovelace's agents, had ventured to appear in the office, they would have been committed by his worship as old acquaintances. In our own day too, though that was not a feature of the writer's age, the whole story of the elopement would have flown on the wings of the newspapers, not to Hampstead and Highgate only, but to Truro and Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and not a Mrs. Moore or a Mrs. Rawlins in England but would have been too particularly acquainted with "the mysterious affair of Harlowe Place," to be deceived by the representations of Lovelace. But it is unfair to tax an author too severely upon improbabilities, without conceding which his story could have no existence; and we have the less title to do so, because, in the history of real life, that which is actually true bears often very little resemblance to that which is probable. If every assault were skilfully parried, and every man played with ability, life would become like a trial of skill with foils, or like a game at chess, and strength and address would no longer be defeated by time and chance, which, in the words of Solomon, happen unto all men.

The conduct of the injured Clarissa through the subsequent scenes, which are perhaps among the most affecting and sublime in the English school of romance, raises her, in her calamitous condition, so far above all around her, that her character beams on the reader with something like superhuman splendour. Our eyes weep, our hearts ache; yet our feelings triumph with the triumph of virtue, as it rises over all the odds which the deepest misfortune, and even degradation, have thrown into the scale. There is a noble pride amid the sorrow with which we contemplate the distresses of such a being as Clarissa, becoming more exalted over that personal dishonour, which, when it has once taken place, under what circumstances soever, is generally understood to infer degradation. It was reserved to Richardson to show there is a chastity of the soul, which can beam out spotless and unsullied even after that of the person has been violated; and the dignity of Clarissa, under her disgrace and her misfortunes, reminds us of the saying of the ancient poet, that a good man, struggling with the tide of adversity, and surmounting it, was a sight which the immortal gods might look down upon with pleasure. This is a subject which Mrs. Barbauld has dwelt upon with a suitable feeling of the dignity of her sex. The more contracted and limited view of Clarissa's merit, merely as resisting the efforts of a practised seducer, although it was unquestionably in Richardson's view, his biographer reasonably spurns as degrading to womanhood. Clarissa, bred in a superior rank in life, led astray by no strong passion, courted by a lover, who had immediate marriage in his power, must have been a subordinate person indeed, if incapable of repelling his attempts at dishonouring her person. I cannot avoid transcribing the excellent reflections which follow this reasoning:—

"The real moral of Clarissa is, that virtue is triumphant in every situation; that in circumstances the most painful and degrading, in a prison, in a brothel, in grief, in distraction, in despair, it is still lovely, still commanding, still the object of our veneration, of our fondest affections; that, if it is seated on the ground, it can still say with Constance,

Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.

"The novelist that has produced this effect, has performed his office well, and it is immaterial what particular maxim is selected under the name of a moral, while such are the reader's feelings. If our feelings are in favour of virtue, the novel is virtuous; if of vice, the novel is vicious. The greatness of Clarissa is shown by her separating herself from her lover, as soon as she perceives his dishonourable views; in her choosing death rather than a repetition of the outrage; in her rejection of those overtures of marriage, which a common mind might have accepted of, as a refuge against worldly dishonour; in her firm indignant carriage, mixed with calm patience and Christian resignation, and in the greatness of mind with which she views and enjoys the approaches of death, and her meek forgiveness of her unfeeling relations."*

These arguments, however, were not at first readily admitted by Richardson's warmest admirers. The first four volumes of "Clarissa" having appeared, and a report having been spread that the catastrophe was to be unfortunate, many remonstrances were made on the subject by those readers who shrunk from the extreme pain inflicted by the tragical part of the narrative, and, laying aside the contemplation of the moral, complained, that in a professed work of amusement, the author had contrived to harrow up their feelings to a degree that was intolerably painful. Old Cibber raved on the subject like a profane Bedlamite; and, what was perhaps of more consequence to Richardson, the rumour of Lovelace's success, and Clarissa's death, occasioned Lady Bradshaigh's opening her romantic correspondence with him, under the assumed name of Belfour. In reply to the expostulations of the latter, Richardson frankly stated his own noble plan, of which he had too just a conception to alter it, in compliance with the remonstrances of his correspondents.

"Indeed you are not particular in your wishes for a happy ending, as it is called. Nor can I go through some of the scenes myself without being sensibly touched. (Did I not say that I was another Pygmalion?) But yet I had to show, for example sake, a young lady struggling nobly with the greatest difficulties, and triumphing from the best motives, in the course of distresses, the tenth part of which would have sunk even manly hearts; yet tenderly educated, born to

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* Life of Richardson.

affluence, naturally meek, although, where an exertion of spirit was necessary, manifesting herself to be a true heroine."*

Defeated in this point, the friends and correspondents of Richardson became even more importunate for the reformation of Lovelace, and the winding up the story by his happy union with Clarissa. On this subject also, Cibber ranted and the ladies implored, with an earnestness that seems to imply at once a belief that the persons in whom they interested themselves had an existence, and that it was in the power of the writer of their memoirs to turn their destiny which way he pleased; and one damsel, eager for the conversion of Lovelace, implores Richardson to "save his soul;" as if there had been actually a living sinner in the case, and his future state had literally depended on the decision to be pronounced by her admired author.

Against all these expostulations Richardson hardened himself. He knew that to bestow Clarissa upon the repentant Lovelace would have been to undermine the fabric he had built. This was the very purpose which the criminal had proposed to himself in the atrocious crime he had committed, and it was to dismiss him from the scene rewarded, not punished. The sublimity of the moral would have been altogether destroyed, since vice would have been no longer rendered hateful and miserable through its very success, nor virtue honoured and triumphant even by its degradation. The death of Clarissa alone could draw down on the guilty head of her betrayer the just and necessary retribution, and his guilt was of far too deep a dye to be otherwise expiated. Besides, the author felt, and forcibly pointed out, the degradation which the fervent creation of his fancy must have sustained, could she, with all her wrongs forgotten, and with the duty imposed on her by matrimony, to love, honour, and obey her betrayer, have sat down the commonplace good wife of her reformed rake. Indeed, those who peruse the work with attention, will perceive that the author has been careful, in the earlier stages of his narrative, to bar out every prospect of such a union. Notwithstanding the levities and constitutional good-humour of Lovelace, his mind is too much perverted, his imagination too much inflamed, by his own insane Quixotism, and, above all, his heart is too much hardened, to render it possible for any one seriously to think of his conversion as sincere, or his union with Clarissa as happy. He had committed a crime for which he deserved death by the law of the country: and notwithstanding those good qualities with which the author has invested him, that he may not seem an actual incarnate fiend, there is no reader but feels vindictive pleasure when Morden passes the sword through his body.

On the other hand, Clarissa, reconciled to her violator, must have lost, in the eye of the reader, that dignity, with which the refusal of his hand, the only poor reparation he could offer, at present invests her; and it was right and fitting that a creature, every way so excel-

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* Correspondence of Richardson.

lent, should, as is fabled of the ermine, pine to death on account of the stain with which she had been so injuriously sullied. We cannot, consistently with the high idea which we have previously entertained of her purity of character, imagine her surviving the contamination. On the whole, as Richardson himself pleaded, Clarissa has, as the narrative presently stands, the greatest of triumphs even in this world—the greatest, even in and after the outrage, and because of the outrage, than any woman ever had.

It has often been observed, that the extreme severity of the parents and relatives in this celebrated novel does not belong to our day, or perhaps even to Richardson's; and that Clarissa's dutiful scruples at assuming her own estate, or extricating herself by Miss Howe's means, are driven to extremity. Something, no doubt, is to be allowed for the licence of an author, who must necessarily, in order to command interest and attention, extend his incidents to the extreme verge of probability; but, besides, it is well known, that at least within the century, the notions of the *patria potestas* were of a much severer nature than those now entertained. Forced marriages in those days did sometimes actually take place, and that in houses of considerable rank; and the voice of public opinion had then comparatively little effect upon great and opulent families, inhabiting their country-seats, and living amid their own dependents, where strange violences were sometimes committed, under the specious pretext of enforcing domestic discipline. Each family was a little tribe within itself; and the near relations, like the elders among the Jews, had their Sanhedrim, where resolutions were adopted, as laws to control the free will of each individual member. It is upon this family compact that the Harlowes ground the rights which they assert with so much tyranny; and before the changes which have slackened the bonds of relationship, we believe that such incidents were not infrequent. But whether we consider Richardson as exhibiting a state of manners which may have lingered in the remote parts of England down to his own time, or suppose that he coloured them according to his own invention, and particularly according to his high notions of the "awful rule and right supremacy," lodged in the head of a family, there can be no doubt of the spirit with which the picture is executed; and particularly of the various gradations in which the Harlowe spirit exhibits itself, in the insolent and conceited brother, the mean and envious sister, the stern and unrelenting father, softened down in the elder brother James, and again roughened and exaggerated in the old seaman Anthony, each of whom, in various modifications, exhibits the same family features of avarice, pride, and ambition.

Miss Howe is an admirably sketched character, drawn in strong contrast to that of Clarissa, yet worthy of being her friend—with more of worldly perspicacity, though less of abstracted principle; and who, when they argue upon points of doubt and delicacy, is often able, by going directly to the question at issue, to start the game, while her more gifted correspondent does but beat the bush. Her high spirit

and disinterested devotion for her friend, acknowledging, as she does on all occasions, her own inferiority, show her in a noble point of view; and though we are afraid she must have given honest Hickman (notwithstanding her resolutions to the contrary) rather an uneasy time of it after marriage, yet it is impossible not to think that she was a prize worth suffering for.

The publication of "Clarissa" raised the fame of the author to the height. No work had appeared before, perhaps none has appeared since, containing so many direct appeals to the passions, stated too in a manner so irresistible. And high as his reputation stood in his own country, it was even more exalted in those of France and Germany, whose imaginations are more easily excited, and their passions more easily moved by tales of fictitious distress, than are the cold-blooded English. Foreigners of distinction have been known to visit Hampstead, and to inquire for the Flask Walk, distinguished as a scene in Clarissa's history, just as travellers visit the rocks of Meillerie to view the localities of Rousseau's tale of passion. Diderot vied with Rousseau in heaping incense upon the shrine of the English author. The former compares him to Homer, and predicts for his memory the same honours which are rendered to the Father of Epic Poetry; and the last, besides his well-known burst of eloquent panegyric, records his opinion in a letter to D'Alembert: "On n'a jamais fait encore, en quelque langue que ce soit, de roman égal à Clarisse, ni même approchant."

There was never, perhaps, an author who was not encouraged by popular applause again to venture himself before the public; and Richardson, secure, moreover, in the prepossession of a large party of friends and admirers, was of course no exception to the general rule.

The subject of the third and last novel of this eminent author seems to have been in a great degree dictated by the criticism which "Clarissa" had undergone. To his own surprise, as he assured his correspondents, he found that the gaiety, spirit, and occasionally, generosity of Lovelace, joined to his courage and ingenuity, had, in spite of his crimes, made him find too much grace in the eyes of his fair readers. He had been so studious to prevent this, that when he perceived his rake was rising into an undue and dangerous degree of favour with some of the young ladies of his own school, he threw in some darker shades of character. In this, according to the eulogy of Johnson, he was eminently successful; but still Lovelace appeared too captivating in the eyes of his fair friends, and even of Lady Bradshaigh; so that nothing remained for the author, in point of morality, but to prepare with all speed an antidote to the poison which he had incautiously administered.

With this view, the writer tasked his talents to embody the *beau idéal* of a virtuous character, who should have all the title to admiration which he could receive from wit, rank, figure, accomplishment, and fashion, yet compounded inseparably with the still higher qualifications which form the virtuous citizen and the faithful votary

of religion. It was with this view that Richardson produced the work, originally denominated "The Good Man;" a title which, before publication, he judiciously exchanged for that of "Sir Charles Grandison."

It must be acknowledged, that although the author exerted his utmost ability to succeed in the task which he had assumed, and, so far as detached parts of the work are considered, has given the same marks of genius which he employed in his former novels, yet this last production has neither the simplicity of the two first volumes of "Pamela," nor the deep and overwhelming interest of the inimitable "Clarissa," and must, considering it as a whole, be ranked considerably beneath both these works.

The principal cause of failure may be perhaps traced to Richardson's too strong recollection of the aversion which his friendly critics and correspondents had displayed to the melancholy scenes in "Clarissa," in which, darkening and deepening as the story proceeds, his heroine is involved, until the scene is closed by death. He was resolved (perhaps) to give his readers some indemnification, and having formerly shown them virtue in its state of earthly persecution and calamity, now resolved to introduce her, as John Bunyan says, in her golden slippers, and walking abroad in the sunshine. But the author did not sufficiently reflect, that the beacon, upon an exposed headland, sending forth its saving light amid the rain and the storm, and burning where all around combines to its extinction, is a far grander and more interesting object to the imagination than the chandelier in a lordly hall, secured by walls and casements from the possibility even of a transient breeze agitating its brilliancy of lustre.

Sir Charles Grandison is a man of large fortune, of rank and of family, high in the opinion of all who know him, and discharging with the most punctilious accuracy his duties in every relation of life. But in order to his doing so, he is accommodated with all those exterior advantages which command awe and attract respect, although entirely adventitious to excellence of principle. He is munificent, but his fortune bears out his generosity; he is affectionate in his domestic relations, but the devoted attachment of his family leaves him no temptation to be otherwise; his temperament is averse from excess; his passions are under the command of his reason; his courage has been so often proved, that he can safely, and without reproach of the world, prefer the dictates of Christianity to the rules of modern honour; and in adventuring himself into danger, he has all the strength and address of Lovelace himself to trust to. Sir Charles encounters no misfortunes, and can hardly be said to undergo any trials. The author, in a word, has sent him forth

> Victorious,
> Happy, and glorious.

The only dilemma to which he is exposed in the course of the seven volumes, is the doubt which of two beautiful and accomplished women,

excellent in disposition and high in rank, sister excellences as it were, both being devotedly attached to him, he shall be pleased to select for his bride; and this with so small a shade of partiality towards either, that we cannot conceive his happiness to be endangered wherever his lot may fall, except by a generous compassion for her, whom he must necessarily relinquish. Whatever other difficulties surround him occasionally, vanish before his courage and address; and he is almost secure to make friends, and even converts, of those whose machinations may for a moment annoy him. In a word, Sir Charles Grandison "walks the course" without competition or rivalry.

All this does well enough in a funeral sermon or monumental inscription, where, by privilege of suppressing the worst qualities and exaggerating the better, such images of perfection are sometimes presented. But in the living world, a state of trial and a valley of tears, such unspotted worth, such unvarying perfection, is not to be met with; and, what is still more important, it could not, if we suppose it to have existence, be attended by all those favours of fortune which are accumulated upon Richardson's hero; and hence the fatal objection of Sir Charles Grandison being the

Faultless monster that the world ne'er saw.

It is not the moral and religious excellence of Sir Charles which the reader is so much disposed to quarrel with, as that, while Richardson designs to give a high moral lesson by the success of his hero, he has failed through resting that success on circumstances which have nothing to do either with morality or religion, but might have been, if indeed, they are not, depicted as the properties of Lovelace himself. It is impossible that any very deep lesson can be derived from contemplating a character, at once of unattainable excellence, and which is placed in circumstances of worldly ease and prosperity that render him entirely superior to temptation. Propose the example of Sir Charles Grandison to the sordid spirit, he will answer, I will be generous when I have such an estate—to the unkind brother or the cold friend, I will be affectionate, is the ready answer, when I meet such reciprocity of tenderness. Ask him who fears the reproach of the world, why he gives or accepts a challenge?—I would do neither, he replies, were my reputation for courage established like that of Sir Charles Grandison. The timid may excuse himself for not being bold in the defence of innocence, because he has neither Sir Charles's resolution, nor that inimitable command of his sword, which enables the hero to baffle, and, in case of need, to disarm, all who may oppose his interference. Even the libertine will plead difference of temperament and habits, and contend, that Sir Charles had all his passions under such complete subjugation, that there was no more danger of his being hurried off by them, than that his six long-tailed horses should run away with his chariot. He does, unquestionably, now and then, in his communications to Dr. Bartlett and others, speak of his

naturally passionate temperament as if it were still existing; but we see so little of its effects, or rather it appears, in spite of his own report, so utterly subdued and withered within him, that the only purpose of the confession seems to be, the adding this trait of modesty and humiliation to the more splendid virtues of the hero.

After all, there may, in this reasoning, be much of the perversity of human nature, which is always ready, like Job's tempter, to dispute that worth which has not been proved by adversity. But it was human nature which the author proposed to instruct; and, therefore, to human nature and its feelings, he should have adapted his example of piety and morality.

To take the matter less gravely, and consider "Sir Charles Grandison" as a work of amusement, it must be allowed, that the interest is destroyed in a great measure by the unceasing ascendancy given to the fortune, as well as the character, of the hero. We feel he is too much under the special protection of the author to need any sympathy of ours, and that he has nothing to dread from all the Pollexfens, O'Haras, and so forth, in the world, so long as Richardson is decidedly his friend. Neither are our feelings much interested about him even while his fate is undetermined. He evinces too little passion, and certainly no preference, being clearly ready, with heart and good-will, to marry either Clementina or Harriet Byron, as circumstances may render most proper, and to bow gracefully upon the hand of the rejected lady, and bid her adieu.

Lady Bradshaigh, the frankest of Richardson's correspondents, states this objection to him in full force, and without ceremony:—"You have made me bounce off my chair with reading that two good girls were in love with your hero, and that he was fond of both. I have such despicable notions of a divided love, that I cannot have an idea how a worthy object can entertain such a thought." The truth is, that Richardson was always arguing for the superiority of duty and principle over feeling, and, not very wisely perhaps, in an abstract view at least, set himself willingly to the task of combating even the sentiment of honest and virtuous love, considered as a passion, although implanted by nature in our breasts for the wisest, as well as kindest purposes, and leading, were it only by carrying our views and wishes beyond ourselves, to many more good consequences, under the modification of reason, than to evil, numerous as these may be, when it hurries us beyond reason's limits. So far did the author carry his contempt and defiance of Cupid, who had, down to this time, been the omnipotent deity of romance, as even to alarm Lady Bradshaigh by some hypothetical arguments in favour of polygamy, a system which goes to exclude individual preferences with a vengeance.

All this must be pardoned to the honest and kind-hearted Richardson, partly for argument's sake, partly because he had very high notions of the rights of the husband, as well as those of the master. It may be some comfort to the ladies to know, as appears from some passages in his Correspondence, that, like James the First of England,

his despotism consisted more in theory than in practice; and that Mrs. Richardson appears to have had her full share of practical authority and control in whatever related to their quiet family.

Regarding Sir Charles, then, merely as the twenty-thousand prize, which was to be drawn by either of the ladies who might be so lucky as to win it, and whose own inclinations scarcely decided him more to the one than to the other, it is clear that the interest must rest—no very flattering thing for the fair sex—upon that predilection which the reader may entertain for the English or for the Italian lady. And with respect to Miss Byron, amiable as she is represented, and with qualities supposed to approach almost to those of Clarissa in her happiest state, there attaches a sort of indelicacy, of which we must suppose Clarissa, in similar circumstances, entirely incapable. She literally forms a league in Sir Charles's family, and among his friends, for the purpose of engaging his affections, and is contented to betray the secret of her own love, even when she believes it unreturned—a secret which every delicate mind holds so sacred—not only to the sister of Sir Charles and old Dr. Bartlett, but to all her own relations, and the Lord knows whom besides, who are all to be edified by the perusal of Sir Charles's letters. Most readers have felt that this conduct on Miss Byron's part, though designed only to elevate the hero, has the contrary effect of degrading the character of the heroine.

The real heroine of the work, and the only one in whose fortunes we take a deep and decided interest, is the unhappy Clementina, whose madness, and indeed her whole conduct, is sketched with the same exquisite pencil which drew the distresses of Clarissa. There are in those passages relating to her, upon which we do not dwell, familiar as they must be to all our readers, scenes which equal anything that Richardson ever wrote, and which would alone be sufficient to rank him with the highest name in his line of composition. These, with other detached passages in the work, serve to show that it was no diminution in Richardson's powers, but solely the adoption of an inferior plan, which renders his two earlier works preferable to "Sir Charles Grandison."

The structure of "Sir Charles Grandison" being wholly different from that of "Pamela" and "Clarissa," enabled the author entirely to avoid, in his last work, some free and broad descriptions, which were unavoidable while detailing the enterprises of Mr. B—— or Lovelace. But though he was freed from all temptation to fall into indelicate warmth of description, a fault which the grosser age of our fathers endured better than ours, Richardson was still unfortunate in assuming the tone of elegance and of high fashion, to which, in his last work, he evidently aspired. Mr. B—— is a country squire; the Harlowes, a purse-proud and vulgar race; Lovelace himself a *roué* in point of manners; Lord M—— has the manners and sentiments of an old rural gossip; and the vivacity of Miss Howe often approaches to vulgarity. Many models must have been under the observant eye of Richardson, extensive as his acquaintance was through all excepting

the highest circle of fashion, from which he might have drawn such characters, or at least have borrowed their manners and language.

But our author's aspiring to trace the manners of the great, as in "Sir Charles Grandison," has called down the censure of an unquestionable judge, and who appears, in his case, disposed to be a severe critic. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in her inimitable Letters, has the following passages:—"His Anna Howe and Charlotte Grandison are recommended as patterns of charming pleasantry, and applauded by his saint-like dames, who mistake folly for wit and humour, and impudence and ill-nature for spirit and fire. Charlotte behaves like a humorsome child, and should have been used like one, and whipped in the presence of her friendly confederate, Harriet.—He (Richardson) has no idea of the manners of high life; his old Lord M—— talks in the style of a country justice, and his virtuous young ladies romp like the wenches round a Maypole. Such liberties as pass between Mr. Lovelace and his cousins, are not to be excused by the relation. I should have been much astonished if Lord Denbigh should have offered to kiss me; and I dare swear, Lord Trentham never attempted such impertinence to you."*

It is no disrespect to Richardson to say, that he could not have had many opportunities of seeing the manners of high life; for society is formed upon principles different entirely from a selection of the best and wisest men; and the author's condition, though far from being low, indigent, or disrespectable, placed him in a humbler and happier rank. But there is one sort of good-breeding which is natural and unchangeable, and another, which, consisting of an acquaintance with the evanescent manners and fashions of the day, is merely conventional, and is perpetually changing, like the modes of dress observed in the same circles. The principles of the first are imprinted in every bosom of sense and delicacy. But to be ignorant of the latter, only shows that an author is not very conversant with the society where those flitting rules are observed, or, what may be equally the case, is incapable of tracing their changeful and fading hues. To transgress the rules of natural good-breeding, or to represent characters by whom they should be practised as doing so, is a want of taste which must adhere as a blemish to the work so long as it is read. But crimes against conventional good breeding run a prescriptive course, and cease to be observed when the rules transgressed have, according to the usual mutability of fashion, been superseded by others. Such errors are like Livy's patavinity, which became imperceptible to latter readers. It was natural that a person of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's taste and rank should be shocked at the want of decorum which she complains of, but at this distance of time we are not sufficiently acquainted with the fashions of George the Second's reign to share her displeasure. We know in general, that

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* Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

salutation continued for a long period to be permitted by fashion, as much as the more lately licensed freedoms of shaking hands and offering the arm; and with this general knowledge it is of little consequence to us, at what particular year of God men of quality were restrained from kissing their cousins, or whether Richardson has made an anachronism in that important matter. The merit of Lovelace, considered as a portrait, remains to us the same, notwithstanding that wig, which is now frozen to his head amid his sentimental attendance in the ivy-coppice, and anon skimmed into the fire when he receives the fatal news of Clarissa's death. We think as little of dress or fashion as when we gaze on the portraits of Vandyke, without asking whether the ruff and the sleeve be or be not precisely of the cut of the period. Lovelace, whether exactly corresponding to the minute fashions of his own time or no, continues equally to be what he is described in the nervous language of Johnson, in his "Life of Rowe." "The character of Lothario seems to have been expanded by Richardson into that of Lovelace; but he has excelled his original in the moral effect of the fiction. Lothario, with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness. It was in the power of Richardson alone, to teach us at once esteem and detestation; to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which wit, and elegance, and courage, naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain."*

Still, however, it is impossible altogether to vindicate Richardson from Lady Mary's charge, or to pronounce him wholly guiltless of trespassing upon the essence of good-breeding, as well as upon its temporary rules and modifications. Lady G—— has as much horse-play in her raillery as Miss Howe, and her lord is a double of Mr. Hickman. Now there ought to have been a difference betwixt the vivacity of a country-bred young lady, trained up under a sufficiently vulgar mother, and that of Miss Grandison, who had always lived in the very first society; and this Lady Mary has a just right to complain of.

There is a fault also attaches to the manners of Sir Charles Grandison himself, though doubtless intended as a model of elegance and courtesy. The very care which the author has taken to deck his manners and conversation with every becoming grace of action and words, has introduced a heavy formality, and a sort of flourishing politeness, into his whole person and deportment. His manner, in short, seems too much studied, and his talk too stiffly complimentary, too like a printed book, to use a Scottish phrase, to permit us to associate the ideas of gentlemanlike ease and affability, either to the one or the other. We believe this objection has been very generally entertained by the fairer sex, for whose protection the laws of politeness are introduced, and who must therefore be the best judges how far they are complied with.

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* Life of Richardson.

Notwithstanding these imperfections, and the disadvantage which a new work always sustains at first comparison with its predecessors, Richardson's fame was not diminished by the publication of his "Sir Charles Grandison," and his fortune would have been increased but for a mercantile fraud, of a nature peculiarly audacious. By some means which he could not detect, sheet after sheet of the work as it passed the press was stolen from the author's printing-house, and sent to Dublin, where availing themselves of the relations between the two countries as they then stood, some unprincipled booksellers prepared an Irish edition of the book, which they were thus enabled to bring into the market as soon as the author, and, by underselling him, greatly limited his deserved profits. Richardson appears in vain to have sought redress for this injustice by means of his correspondents in Ireland. The union with the sister kingdom has, among other beneficial effects, had that of rendering such frauds impossible in future; and in that respect has been of the greatest service to literature.

Such is the succinct history of Richardson's productions, and such was its conclusion. It is only necessary to mention, that, besides his three celebrated novels, he completed that collection of "Familiar Letters," the commencement of which led the way to "Pamela"—"A work," says Mrs. Barbauld, "usually found in the servant's drawer, but which, when so found, has not unfrequently detained the eye of the mistress, wondering all the while by what secret charm she was induced to turn over a book, apparently too low for her perusal, and that charm was—Richardson." This work, which we have never seen, is said, by the same authority, to illustrate the extreme accuracy with which Richardson had attended to all the duties of life.

Richardson also wrote, in order to assist Dr. Johnson, the ninety-seventh number of the "Rambler," which the editor ushered in by the following deserved encomium:—"The reader is indebted for this day's entertainment to an author from whom the age has received greater favours, who has enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue."

In our detailed remarks on Richardson's several novels, we have, as usual, anticipated much which we otherwise had to say concerning his general merits as an author. It will be to his immortal praise, that he was perhaps the first author in this line of composition, who, in fictitious narrative, threw aside the trappings of romance, with all its extravagance, and appealed to the genuine passions of the human heart. The circumstances which led him to descend from the stilts of bombast into the walks of nature, are described in his own account of the origin of "Pamela," and he quickly discovered that it was not in humble life only that those feelings exist which find sympathy in every reader's bosom; for, if the sympathy which the distresses and

the magnanimity of Clarissa excite, be not universal, we cannot envy those who are proof against their charm.

Richardson was well qualified to be the discoverer of a new style of writing, for he was a cautious, deep, and minute examinator of the human heart, and, like Cooke or Parry, left neither head, bay, nor inlet behind him, until he had traced its soundings, and laid it down in his chart, with all its minute sinuosities, its depths, and its shallows. Hence the high, and, comparatively considered, perhaps the undue superiority assigned by Johnson to Richardson over Fielding, against whom he seems to have entertained some prejudice. In one passage he asserts, that "there is more knowledge of the human heart in one letter of Richardson's than in all "Tom Jones."* And in another, he thus explains the proposition: "There is all the difference in the world between characters of nature and characters of manners, and there is this difference between the characters of Fielding and those of Richardson. Characters of manners are very entertaining; but they are to be understood by a more superficial observer than characters of nature, where a man must dive into the recesses of the human heart."† Again, in comparing these two distinguished authors, the critic uses this illustration,—"that there was as great a difference between them, as between a man who knew how a watch was made, and a man who could tell the hour by looking at the dial-plate."† Dissenting as we do from the conclusions to be deduced from Dr. Johnson's simile, we would rather so modify it as to describe both authors as excellent mechanics; the time-pieces of Richardson showing a great deal of the internal work by which the index is regulated; while those of Fielding merely point to the hour of the day, being all that most men desire to know. Or, to take a more manageable comparison, the analogy betwixt the writings of Fielding and Richardson resembles that which free, bold, and true sketches bear to paintings that have been very minutely laboured, and which, amid their excellence, still exhibit some of the heaviness that almost always attends the highest degree of finishing. This, indeed, is admitted by Johnson himself, in his reply to the observation of the Honourable Thomas Erskine, that Richardson was tedious.—"Why, sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so much fretted, that you would hang yourself. But you must read him for the sentiment, and consider the story only as giving occasion to the sentiment." Were we to translate the controversy into plain language, it might be summed up in pronouncing the works of Richardson the more instructive, and the more deeply affecting, those of Fielding the more amusing; and that a reader might select the one or the other for his studies, according to Tony Lumpkin's phrase as he felt himself "in a concantenation accordingly;"—with this difference, however, that he would laugh with

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* Boswell's Life of Johnson. † Ibid.

Fielding, may open "Tom Jones" at a venture; but he who would weep with Richardson must be content to read through many pages, until his mind is in the mood fittest to appreciate the pathetic scenes introduced by a succession of minute and highly laboured details. This no doubt frequently occasions a suspension of the narrative, in order to afford time for the minute delineation of character. "Richardson himself has explained his principle," as is well observed by Mr. Disraeli. "If," he tells us, "I give speeches and conversations, I ought to give them justly, for the humours and persons of characters cannot be known, unless I repeat what they say, and their manner of saying it." This process of miniature painting has, however, its bounds; and many readers will be disposed to acquiesce in the remark of D'Alembert,—"*La Nature est bonne à imiter, mais non pas jusqu'à l'ennui.*"

It is impossible to tell whether Richardson's peculiar and circumstantial mode of narrative arose entirely out of the mode in which he evolves his story by the correspondence of the actors, or whether his early partiality for letter-writing was not rather founded upon his innate love of detail. But these talents and propensities must have borne upon and fortified each other. To the letter-writer every event is recent, and is described while immediately under the eye, without a corresponding degree of reference to its relative importance to what has past and what is to come. All is, so to speak, painted in the foreground, and nothing in the distance. A game at whist, if the subject of a letter, must be detailed as much at length as a debate in the House of Commons, upon a subject of great national interest; and hence, perhaps, that tendency to prolixity, of which the readers of Richardson frequently complain.

There is an additional advantage, tending to the same disagreeable impression, since it requires that incidents must be, in many instances, detailed again and again, by the various actors, to their different correspondents. If this affords the opportunity of placing the characters, each in their own peculiar light, and contrasting their thoughts, plans, and sentiments, that advantage is at least partly balanced, by arresting the progress of the story, which stands still while the characters show all their paces, like horses in the manége, without advancing a yard. But then it gives the reader, as Mrs. Barbauld well remarks, the assurance of being thoroughly acquainted with those in whose fate he is to be interested. In consequence of this, adds that accomplished lady, "our feelings are not transient, elicited here and there by a pathetic stroke, but we regard his characters as real personages, whom we know and converse with, and whose fate remains to be decided in the course of events."* The minute style of Richardson is accordingly attended with this peculiar advantage, that as strong a light as can be necessary is thrown on every personage who advances on the scene, and that we have as

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* Life of Richardson.

distinct an idea of the individual and peculiar character of every female in Mrs. Sinclair's family whom it is necessary to name; of the greedy and hypocritical Joseph Leman; of the plausible Captain Singleton, and of Lovelace's other agents, as we have of Lovelace himself. The character of Colonel Morden, for example, although we see so little of him, is quite individual. He is high-spirited, bold, and skilful at his weapon; a man of the world and a man of honour; neither violent enough to precipitate his revenge, nor forbearing enough to avoid grasping it when the fitting opportunity offers. The awe with which he is regarded by the Harlowes even before his appearance, the respect which Clarissa entertains for him as a natural protector, prepares us for his approach as he enters on the scene, like the Avenger of Blood; too late, indeed, to save Clarissa, but a worthy vindicator of her wrongs, and a no less worthy conqueror of Lovelace. Whatever piety and forbearance there is in his cousin's last charge to such a man as Colonel Morden, we cannot for a moment be either surprised or sorry that it is disobeyed.

It must not be overlooked, that, by the circumstantial detail of minute, trivial, and even uninteresting circumstances, the author gives to his fiction an air of reality that can scarcely otherwise be obtained. In every real narrative, he who tells it, dwells upon slight and inconsiderable circumstances, no otherwise interesting than because they are associated in his mind with the more important events which he desires to communicate. De Foe, who understood, and availed himself on all occasions of this mode of garnishing an imaginary history with all the minute accompaniments which distinguish a true one, was scarce a greater master of this peculiar art, than was our author Richardson.

Still, with all these advantages, which so peculiarly adapted the mode of carrying on the story by epistolary correspondence to Richardson's peculiar genius, it has its corresponding defects. In order that all may be written, which must be known for the purpose of the narrative, the characters must frequently write, when it would be more natural for them to be acting—must frequently write what it is not natural to write at all—and must at all times write a great deal oftener, and a great deal more, than one would now think human life has time for. But these arguments did not probably weigh much with Richardson, an inveterate letter-writer from his youth upwards, and himself certainly as indefatigable (we had almost said formidable) a correspondent as any of the characters he has drawn.

Richardson was himself aware of the luxuriance of his imagination, and that he was sometimes apt to exceed the patience of the reader. He indulged his own vein, by writing without any fixed plan, and at great length, which he afterwards curtailed and compressed; so that, strange as it may seem, his compositions were reduced almost one-half in point of size before they were committed to the press. In his two first novels, he showed much attention to the plot; and though diffuse and prolix in narration, can never be said to be rambling or desultory.

No characters are introduced, but for the purpose of advancing the plot: and there are but few of those digressive dialogues and dissertations with which "Sir Charles Grandison" abounds. The story of "Pamela" and of "Clarissa" keeps the direct road, though it moves slowly. But in his last work, the author is much more excursive. There is indeed little in the plot to require attention; the various events, which are successively narrated, being no otherwise connected together, than as they place the character of the hero in some new and peculiar point of view. The same may be said of the numerous and long conversations upon religious and moral topics, which compose so great a part of the work, that a venerable old lady, whom we well knew, when in advanced age she became subject to drowsy fits, chose to hear "Sir Charles Grandison" read to her as she sat in her elbow-chair, in preference to any other work, "because," said she, "should I drop asleep in course of the reading, I am sure when I awake, I shall have lost none of the story, but shall find the party, where I left them, conversing in the cedar-parlour."—It is probable, after all, that the prolixity of Richardson, which, to our giddy-paced times, is the greatest fault of his writing, was not such an objection to his contemporaries. Those who with patience had studied rant and bombast in the folios of Scuderi, could not readily tire of nature, sense, and genius, in the octavos of Richardson. But a modern reader may be permitted to wish that "Clarissa" had been a good deal abridged at the beginning, and "Sir Charles Grandison" at the end; that the last two volumes of "Pamela" had been absolutely cancelled, and the second much compressed. And, upon the whole, it might be desired that many of those trivial details of dresses and decorations, which relish, to say truth, of the mantua-makers' shops in which Richardson made his first efforts at composition, were altogether abolished, especially where they are put into the letters of sensible persons, or impertinently thrust upon us during the currency of a scene of passion. It requires the recollection of Richardson's highest powers to maintain our respect for him, where he makes Lovelace, amidst all his triumph at Clarissa's elopement, describe her dress to Belford, from top to toe, with all the professional accuracy of a man milliner. But it is ungracious to dwell on defects, redeemed by so many excellences.

The style of Richardson was of that pliable and facile kind, which could, with slight variety, be adapted to what best befitted his various personages. When he wrote in his higher characters, it was copious, expressive, and appropriate, but, through the imperfection of his education, not always strictly elegant, nor even accurate. During his life, the common cant as usual was, that he received assistance, which, as a practical admission of personal incompetence to the task they have undertaken, we believe few men of reputed talent would stoop to accept of. It is now known that he wrote his whole works without any such aid, excepting the "Ode to Wisdom" by Mrs. Carter, and a number of Latin quotations, furnished by a learned friend to bedizen the epistle of Elias Brand.

The power of Richardson's painting in his deeper scenes of tragedy, never has been, and probably never will be, excelled. Those of distressed innocence, as in the history of Clarissa and Clementina, rend the very heart; and few, jealous of manly equanimity, should read them for the first time in presence of society. In others, where the same heroines, and particularly Clarissa, display a noble elevation of soul, rising above earthly considerations and earthly oppression, the reader is perhaps as much elevated towards a pure sympathy with virtue and religion, as uninspired composition can raise him. His scenes of unmixed horror, as the deaths of Belton and of the infamous Sinclair, are as dreadful as the former are elevating; and they are directed to the same noble purpose, increasing our fear and hatred of vice, as the former are qualified to augment our love and veneration of virtue. In this respect Fielding might have paid to Richardson's genius the just tribute, which, after much depreciation of his talents in other respects, Dryden rendered to Otway—"Yet he succeeds in moving the passions, which I cannot do."

The lighter qualities of the novelist were less proper to this distinguished author than those which are allied to tragedy. Yet not even in these was Richardson deficient; and his sketches of this kind display the same accurate knowledge of humanity manifested in his higher efforts. His comedy is not overstrained; he never steps beyond the bounds of nature, and never sacrifices truth and probability to brilliancy of effect. Without what is properly termed wit, the author possessed liveliness and gaiety sufficient to colour those comic scenes; and though he is never, like his rival Fielding, irresistibly ludicrous, nor indeed ever essays to be so, there is a fund of quaint drollery pervades his lighter sketches, which renders them very agreeable to the reader.

Without a complete copy of the works of this distinguished and truly English classic, a collection would be deplorably deficient; yet the change of taste and of fashion, from the causes we have freely stated, has thrown a temporary shade over Richardson's popularity. Or, perhaps, he may, in the present generation, be only paying, by comparative neglect, the price of the very high reputation which he enjoyed during his own age. For if immortality, or anything approaching to it, is granted to authors and to their works, it seems only to be on the conditions assigned to that of Nourjahad, in the beautiful Eastern tale, that they shall be liable to occasional intervals of slumber and comparative oblivion. Yet, under all these disadvantages, the genius of Richardson must be ever acknowledged to have done honour to the language in which he wrote, and his manly and virtuous application of his talents to have been of service to morality, and to human nature in general.

HENRY FIELDING.

OF all the works of imagination, to which English genius has given origin, the writings of Henry Fielding are, perhaps, most decidedly and exclusively her own. They are not only altogether beyond the reach of translation, in the proper sense and spirit of the word, but we even question, whether they can be fully understood, or relished to the highest extent, by such natives of Scotland and Ireland, as are not habitually and intimately acquainted with the characters and manners of Old England. Parson Adams, Towwouse, Partridge, above all, Squire Western, are personages as peculiar to England, as they are unknown to other countries. Nay, the actors, whose character is of a more general cast, as Allworthy, Mrs. Miller, Tom Jones himself, and almost all the subordinate agents in the narrative, have the same cast of nationality, which adds not a little to the verisimilitude of the tale. The persons of the story live in England, travel in England, quarrel and fight in England; and scarce an incident occurs, without its being marked by something, which could not well have happened in any other country. This nationality may be ascribed to the author's own habits of life, which rendered him conversant, at different periods, with all the various classes of English society, specimens of which he has selected with inimitable spirit of choice and description, for the amusement of his readers. Like many other men of talent, Fielding was unfortunate,—his life was a life of imprudence and uncertainty; but it was while passing from the high society to which he was born, to that of the lowest and most miscellaneous kind to which his fortune condemned him, that he acquired the extended familiarity with the English character, in every rank and aspect, which has made his name immortal as a painter of national manners.

HENRY FIELDING, born 22nd April, 1707, was of noble descent, the third son of General Edmund Fielding, himself the third son of the Hon. John Fielding, who was the fifth son of William, Earl of Denbigh, who died in 1655. Our author was nearly connected with the ducal family of Kingston, which boasted a brighter ornament than rank or titles could bestow, in the wit and beauty of the celebrated Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. The mother of Henry Fielding was a daughter of Judge Gold, the first wife of his father the General. Henry was the only son of this marriage; but he had four sisters of the full blood, of whom Sarah, the third, was distinguished as an authoress by the history of David Simple, and other literary attempts. General

Fielding married a second time, after the death of his first lady, and had a numerous family, one of whom is well remembered as a judge of police, by the title of Sir John Fielding. It is most probable, that the expense attending so large a family, together with a natural thoughtlessness of disposition on the part of his father, occasioned Henry's being early thrown into those precarious circumstances, with which, excepting at brief intervals, he continued to struggle through life.

After receiving the rudiments of education from the Rev. Mr. Oliver, who is supposed to have furnished him with the outline of Parson Trulliber's character, Fielding was removed to Eton, where he became imbued deeply with that love of classic literature, which may be traced through all his works. As his father destined him to the bar, he was sent from Eton to study at Leyden, where he is said to have given earnest attention to the civil law. Had he remained in this regular course of study, the courts would probably have gained a lawyer, and the world would have lost a man of genius; but the circumstances of General Fielding determined the chance in favour of posterity, though perhaps against his son. Remittances failed, and the young student was compelled to return, at the age of twenty, to plunge into the dissipation of London, without a monitor to warn, or a friend to support him. General Fielding, indeed, promised his son an allowance of two hundred pounds a-year; but this, as his son used to say, "any one might pay who would." It is only necessary to add, that Fielding was tall, handsome, and well-proportioned, had an expressive countenance, and possessed, with an uncommonly strong constitution, a keen relish of pleasure, with the power of enjoying the present moment, and trusting to chance for the future,—and the reader has before him sufficient grounds to estimate the extent of his improvidence and distress. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, his kinswoman, and early acquaintance, has traced his temperament, and its consequences, in a few lines; and no one who can use her words, would willingly employ his own.

"I am sorry for Henry Fielding's death," says her ladyship, in one of her letters, upon receiving information of that event, "not only as I shall read no more of his writings, but because I believe he lost more than others, as no man enjoyed life more than he did; though few had less occasion to do so, the highest of his preferment being raking in the lowest sinks of vice and misery. I should think it a nobler and less nauseous employment, to be one of the staff-officers that conduct the nocturnal weddings. His happy constitution (even when he had, with great pains, half demolished it,) made him forget every evil, when he was before a venison-pasty, or over a flask of champagne; and I am persuaded he has known more happy moments than any prince upon earth. His natural spirits gave him rapture with his cook-maid, and cheerfulness when he was starving in a garret. There was a great similitude between his character and that of Sir Richard Steele. He had the advantage, both in learning, and, in my opinion, genius; they both agreed in wanting money, in spite of all their friends, and would

have wanted it, if their hereditary lands had been as extensive as their imagination: yet each of them was so formed for happiness, it is pity he was not immortal."

Some resources were necessary for a man of pleasure, and Fielding found them in his pen, having, as he used to say himself, no alternative, but to be a hackney writer, or a hackney coachman. He at first employed himself in writing for the theatre, then in high reputation, having recently engaged the talents of Wycherly, of Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar. Fielding's comedies and farces were brought on the stage in hasty succession; and play after play, to the number of eighteen, sunk or swam on the theatrical sea, betwixt the years 1727 and 1736. None of these are now known or read, excepting the mock-tragedy of "Tom Thumb," the translated play of "The Miser," and the farces of "The Mock-Doctor," and "Intriguing Chamber-Maid;" and yet they are the production of an author unrivalled for his conception and illustration of character in the kindred walk of imaginary narrative.

Fielding, the first of British novelists, for such he may surely be termed, has thus added his name to that of Le Sage and others, who, eminent for fictitious narration, have either altogether failed in their dramatic attempts, or at least have fallen far short of that degree of excellence, which might have been previously augured of them. It is hard to fix upon any plausible reason for a failure, which has occurred in too many instances to be the operation of mere chance, especially since *à priori* one would think the same talents necessary for both walks of literature. Force of character, strength of expression, felicity of contrast and situation, a well-constructed plot, in which the development is at once natural and unexpected, and where the interest is kept uniformly alive, till summed up by the catastrophe—all these are requisites as essential to the labour of the novelist, as to that of the dramatist, and, indeed, appear to comprehend the sum of the qualities necessary to success in both departments. Fielding's biographers have, in this particular instance, explained his lack of theatrical success, as arising entirely from the careless haste with which he huddled up his dramatic compositions; it being no uncommon thing with him to finish an act or two in a morning, and to write out whole scenes upon the paper in which his favourite tobacco had been wrapped up. Negligence of this kind will no doubt give rise to great inequalities in the productions of an author, so careless of his reputation; but will scarcely account for an attribute something like dulness, which pervades Fielding's plays, and which is rarely found in those works which a man of genius throws off "at a heat," to use Dryden's expression, in prodigal self-reliance on his internal resources. Neither are we at all disposed to believe, that an author, so careless as Fielding, took much more pains in labouring his novels, than in composing his plays; and we are, therefore, compelled to seek some other and more general reason for the inferiority of the latter. This may perhaps be found in the nature of those two studies, which, intimately connected as they

seem to be, are yet naturally distinct in some very essential particulars; so much so as to vindicate the general opinion, that he who applies himself with eminent success to the one, becomes, in some degree, unqualified for the other;—like the artisan, who, by a particular turn for excellence in one mechanical department, loses the habit of dexterity necessary for acquitting himself with equal reputation in another, or as the artist, who has dedicated himself to the use of water-colours, is usually less distinguished by his skill in oil-painting.

It is the object of the novel-writer, to place before the reader as full and accurate a representation of the events which he relates, as can be done by the mere force of an excited imagination, without the assistance of material objects. His sole appeal is made to the world of fancy and of ideas, and in this consists his strength and his weakness, his poverty and his wealth. He cannot, like the painter, present a visible and tangible representation of his towns and his woods, his palaces and his castles; but, by awakening the imagination of a congenial reader, he places before his mind's eye, landscapes fairer than those of Claude, and wilder than those of Salvator. He cannot, like the dramatist, present before our living eyes the heroes of former days, or the beautiful creations of his own fancy, embodied in the grace and majesty of Kemble or of Siddons; but he can teach his reader to conjure up forms even more dignified and beautiful than theirs. The same difference follows him through every branch of his art. The author of a novel, in short, has neither stage nor scene-painter, nor company of comedians, nor dresser, nor wardrobe; words, applied with the best of his skill, must supply all that these bring to the assistance of the dramatist. Action, and tone, and gesture, the smile of the lover, the frown of the tyrant, the grimace of the buffoon,—all must be told, for nothing can be shown. Thus, the very dialogue becomes mixed with the narration; for he must not only tell what the characters actually said, in which his task is the same as that of the dramatic author, but must also describe the tone, the look, the gesture, with which their speech was accompanied,—telling, in short, all which, in the drama, it becomes the province of the actor to express. It must, therefore, frequently happen, that the author best qualified for a province, in which all depends on the communication of his own ideas and feelings to the reader, without any intervening medium, may fall short of the skill necessary to adapt his compositions to the medium of the stage, where the very qualities most excellent in a novelist are out of place, and an impediment to success. Description and narration, which form the essence of the novel, must be very sparingly introduced into dramatic composition, and scarce ever have a good effect upon the stage. Even Puff, in "The Critic," has the good sense to leave out "all about gilding the eastern hemisphere;" and the very first thing which the players struck out of his memorable tragedy was, the description of Queen Elizabeth, her palfrey, and her side-saddle. The drama speaks to the eye and ear; and when it ceases to address these bodily organs, and would exact from a theatrical audience that exercise

of the imagination which is necessary to follow forth and embody circumstances neither spoken nor exhibited, there is an immediate failure, though it may be the failure of a man of genius. Hence it follows, that though a good acting play may be made by selecting a plot and characters from a novel, yet scarce any effort of genius could render a play into a narrative romance. In the former case, the author has only to contract the events within the space necessary for representation, to choose the most striking characters, and exhibit them in the most forcible contrast, discard from the dialogue whatever is redundant or tedious, and so dramatize the whole. But we know not any effort of genius, which could successfully insert into a good play, those accessories of description and delineation, which are necessary to dilate it into a readable novel. It may thus easily be conceived, that he whose chief talent lies in addressing the imagination only, and whose style, therefore, must be expanded and circumstantial, may fail in a kind of composition where so much must be left to the efforts of the actor, with his allies and assistants the scene-painter and property-man, and where every attempt to interfere with their province, is an error unfavourable to the success of the piece. Besides, it must be further remembered, that in fictitious narrative an author carries on his manufacture alone, and upon his own account; whereas, in dramatic writing, he enters into partnership with the performers, and it is by their joint efforts that the piece is to succeed. Copartnery is called, by civilians, the mother of discord; and how likely it is to prove so in the present instance, may be illustrated by reference to the admirable dialogue between the player and poet in "Joseph Andrews," Book III. chap. 10. The poet must either be contented to fail, or to make great condescensions to the experience, and pay much attention to the peculiar qualifications, of those by whom his piece is to be represented. And he who in a novel had only to fit sentiments, action, and character, to the ideal beings, is now compelled to assume the much more difficult task of adapting all these to real existing persons, who, unless their parts are exactly suited to their own taste, and their peculiar capacities, have, each in his line, the means, and not unfrequently the inclination, to ruin the success of the play. Such are, amongst many others, the peculiar difficulties of the dramatic art, and they seem impediments which lie peculiarly in the way of the novelist who aspires to extend his sway over the stage.

Another circumstance may in the present day greatly interfere with the success of dramatic authors, and arises from the decay of that familiar acquaintance with the stage and its affairs, which prevailed during the more splendid days of the British theatre. It requires a frequent and close attendance upon the stage to learn the peculiar points which interest an audience, and the art of forming the situations, as they are technically called, which arrest attention and bring down applause. This is a qualification for dramatic excellence, which fashionable hours and modern manners render difficult to any one who is not absolutely himself an actor. Nevertheless it is of such conse-

quence, that it will be found, that the dullest and worst plays, written by authors who have themselves trod the stage, are, however intolerable in the closet, redeemed, in action, by some felicitous position or encounter of persons, which makes them pass muster on the boards. But this observation, though arising naturally out of the subject, cannot be said to apply to Fielding, much of whose life had probably been passed behind the scenes, and who had, indeed, as we shall see, been at one time a sort of manager himself.

We have noticed, that until the year 1737, or thereabouts, Fielding lived the life of a man of wit and pleasure about town, seeking and finding amusement in scenes of gaiety and dissipation, and discharging the expense incidental to such a life, by the precarious resources afforded by the stage. He even became, for a season, the manager of a company, having assembled together, in 1735, a number of discarded comedians, who, he proposed, should execute his own dramas at the little theatre in the Haymarket, under the title of the Great Mogul's Company of Comedians. The project did not succeed; and the company, which, as he expressed it, had seemed to drop from the clouds, were under the necessity of disbanding.

During his theatrical career, Fielding, like most authors of the time, found it impossible to interest the public sufficiently in the various attempts which he made to gain popular favour, without condescending to flatter their political animosities. Two of his dramatic pieces, "Pasquin," and "The Historical Register," display great acrimony against Sir Robert Walpole, from whom, in the year 1730, he had in vain sought for patronage. The freedom of his satire is said to have operated considerably in producing a measure which was thought necessary to arrest the licence of the stage, and put an end to that proneness to personal and political satire which had been fostered by the success of Gay's "Beggar's Opera." This measure was the discretional power vested in the Lord Chamberlain, of refusing a licence to any piece of which he should disapprove. The regulation was the cause of much clamour at the time; but licentious satire has since found so many convenient modes of access to the public, that its exclusion from the stage is no longer a matter of interest or regret; nor is it now deemed a violent aggression on liberty, that contending political parties cannot be brought into collision within the walls of the theatres, intended, as they are, for places of public amusement, not for scenes of party struggle.

About 1736, Fielding seems to have formed the resolution of settling in life. He espoused a young lady of Salisbury, named Craddock, beautiful, amiable, and possessed of 1500*l*. About the same time, by the death, it has been supposed, of his mother, he succeeded to a small estate of about 200*l*. per annum, situated at Stower, in Derbyshire, affording him, in those days, the means of decent competence. To this place he retired from London, but unfortunately carried with him the same improvident disposition to enjoy the present at expense of the future, which seems to have marked his whole life. He established

an equipage with showy liveries; and his biographers lay some stress on the circumstance, that the colour, being a bright yellow, required to be frequently renewed,—an important particular, which, in humble imitation of our accurate predecessors, we deem it unpardonable to suppress. Horses, hounds, and the exercise of an unbounded hospitality, soon aided the yellow liverymen in devouring the substance of their improvident master; and three years found Fielding without land, home, or revenue, a student in the Temple, where he applied himself closely to the law, and after the usual term was called to the bar. It is probable he brought nothing from Derbyshire save that experience of a rural life and its pleasures which afterwards enabled him to delineate the inimitable Squire Western.

Fielding had now a profession, and, as he strongly applied his powerful mind to the principles of the law, it might have been expected that success would have followed in proportion. But those professional persons who can advance or retard the practice of a young lawyer, mistrusted, probably, the application of a wit and a man of pleasure to the business they might otherwise have confided to him; and it is said that Fielding's own conduct was such as to justify their want of confidence. Disease, the consequence of a free life, came to the aid of dissipation of mind, and interrupted the course of Fielding's practice by severe fits of the gout, which gradually impaired his robust constitution. We find him, therefore, having again recourse to the stage, where he attempted to produce a continuation of his own piece of "The Virgin Unmasqued;" but, as one of the characters was supposed to be written in ridicule of a man of quality, the Chamberlain refused his licence. Pamphlets of political controversy, fugitive tracts, and essays, were the next means he had recourse to for subsistence; and as his ready pen produced them upon every emergency, he contrived, by the profits, to support himself and his family, to which he was fondly attached.

Amid this anxious career of precarious expedient and constant labour, he had the misfortune to lose his wife; and his grief at this domestic calamity was so extreme, that his friends became alarmed for the consequences to his reason. The violence of the emotion, however, was transient, though his regret was lasting; and the necessity of subsistence compelled him again to resume his literary labours. At length, in the year 1741 or 1742, circumstances induced him to engage in a mode of composition, which he retrieved from the disgrace in which he found it, and rendered a classical department of British literature.

The novel of "Pamela," published in 1740, had carried the fame of Richardson to the highest pitch; and Fielding,—whether he was tired of hearing it over-praised (for a book, several passages of which would now be thought highly indelicate, was in those days even recommended from the pulpit), or whether, as a writer for daily subsistence, he caught at whatever interested the public for the time; or whether, in fine, he was seduced by that wicked spirit of wit which cannot forbear

turning into ridicule the idol of the day,—resolved to caricature the style, principles, and personages of this favourite performance. As Gay's desire to satirize Philips gave rise to "The Shepherd's Week," so Fielding's purpose to ridicule "Pamela" produced the "History of Joseph Andrews;" and in both cases, but especially in the latter, a work was executed infinitely better than could have been expected to arise out of such a motive, and the reader received a degree of pleasure very different, as well as far superior, to what the author himself appears to have proposed. There is, indeed, a fine vein of irony in Fielding's novel, as will appear from comparing it with the pages of "Pamela:" but "Pamela," to which that irony was applied, is now in a manner forgotten, and "Joseph Andrews" continues to be read for the admirable pictures of manners which it presents, and, above all, for the inimitable character of Mr. Abraham Adams, which alone is sufficient to stamp the superiority of Fielding over all writers of his class. The worthy parson's learning, his simplicity, his evangelical purity of heart and benevolence of disposition, are so admirably mingled with pedantry, absence of mind, and with the habit of athletic and gymnastic exercise, then acquired at the universities by students of all descriptions, that he may be safely termed one of the richest productions of the Muse of Fiction. Like Don Quixote, Parson Adams is beaten a little too much, and too often; but the cudgel lights upon his shoulders, as on those of the honoured Knight of La Mancha, without the slightest stain to his reputation; and he is bastinadoed without being degraded. The style of this piece is said, in the preface, to have been an imitation of Cervantes; but both in "Joseph Andrews" and "Tom Jones," the author appears also to have had in view the "Roman Comique" of the once celebrated Scarron. From this author he has copied the mock heroic style, which tells ludicrous events in the language of the classical Epic; a vein of pleasantry which is soon wrought out, and which Fielding has employed so often as to expose him to the charge of pedantry.

"Joseph Andrews" was eminently successful; and the aggrieved Richardson, who was fond of praise even to adulation, was proportionately offended, while his group of admirers, male and female, took care to echo back his sentiments, and to heap Fielding with reproach. Their animosity survived his life, and we find the most ungenerous reproaches thrown upon his memory, in the course of Richardson's correspondence. Richardson was well acquainted with Fielding's sisters, and complained to them,—not of Fielding's usage of himself, that he was too wise, or too proud to mention,—but of his unfortunate predilection to what was mean and low in character and description. The following expressions are remarkable, as well for the extreme modesty of the writer who thus rears himself into the paramount judge of Fielding's qualities, as for the delicacy which could intrude such observations on the ear of his rival's sister: "Poor Fielding! I could not help telling his sister, that I was equally surprised at, and concerned for, his continued lowness. Had your brother, said I, been

born in a stable, or been a runner at a spunging-house, one should have thought him a genius, and wished he had had the advantage of a liberal education, and of being admitted into good company!"—After this, we are not surprised at its being alleged that Fielding was destitute of invention and talents; that the run of his best works was nearly over; and that he would soon be forgotten as an author! Fielding does not appear to have retorted any of this ill-will; so that, if he gave the first offence, and that an unprovoked one, he was also the first to retreat from the contest, and to allow to Richardson those claims which his genius really demanded from the liberality of his contemporaries. In the fifth number of the Jacobite Journal, Fielding highly commends "Clarissa," which is by far the best and most powerful of Richardson's novels, and, with the scenes in "Sir Charles Grandison," which refer to the history of Clementina, contains the passages of deep pathos on which his claim to immortality must finally rest. Perhaps this is one of the cases in which one would rather have sympathized with the thoughtless offender, than with the less liberal and almost ungenerous mind which so long retained its resentment.

After the publication of "Joseph Andrews," Fielding had again recourse to the stage, and brought out "The Wedding-day," which, though on the whole unsuccessful, produced him some small profit. This was the last of his theatrical efforts which appeared during his life. The manuscript comedy of "The Fathers" was lost by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and, when recovered, was acted after the author's death for the benefit of his family. An anecdote respecting the carelessness with which Fielding regarded his theatrical fame, is thus given by former biographers:—

"On one of the days of its rehearsal (*i.e.* the rehearsal of the "Wedding-day"), Garrick, who performed a principal part, and who was even then a favourite with the public, told Fielding he was apprehensive that the audience would make free with him in a particular passage, and remarked, that as a repulse might disconcert him during the remainder of the night, the passage should be omitted,—'No, d—n 'em,' replied he, 'if the scene is not a good one, let them find *that* out.' Accordingly, the play was brought out without alteration, and, as had been foreseen, marks of disapprobation appeared. Garrick, alarmed at the hisses he had met with, retired into the green-room, where the author was solacing himself with a bottle of champagne. He had by this time drank pretty freely; and, glancing his eye at the actor, while clouds of tobacco issued from his mouth, cried out,—'What's the matter, Garrick? what are they hissing now?'—'Why, the scene that I begged you to retrench,' replied the actor; 'I knew it would not do; and they have so frightened me, that I shall not be able to collect myself again the whole night.'—'Oh! d—n 'em,' rejoined he, with great coolness, 'they *have* found it out, have they?'"

Besides various fugitive pieces, Fielding published in, or about 1743, a volume of Miscellanies, including "The Journey from this World to the Next," a tract containing a good deal of Fielding's peculiar

humour, but of which it is difficult to conceive the plan or purport. 'The History of Jonathan Wild the Great' next followed. It is not easy to see what Fielding proposed to himself by a picture of complete vice, unrelieved by anything of human feeling, and never by any accident even deviating into virtue; and the ascribing a train of fictitious adventures to a real character, has in it something clumsy and inartificial on the one hand, and, on the other, subjects the author to a suspicion that he only used the title of Jonathan Wild in order to connect his book with the popular renown of that infamous depredator. But there are few passages in Fielding's more celebrated works more marked with his peculiar genius, than the scene betwixt his hero and the Ordinary, when in Newgate.

Besides these more permanent proofs of his industrious application to literature, the pen of Fielding was busily employed in the political and literary controversies of the times. He conducted one paper called "The Jacobite Journal," the object of which was to eradicate those feelings and sentiments which had been already so effectually crushed upon the Field of Culloden. "The True Patriot," and "The Champion," were works of the same kind, which he entirely composed, or in which, at least, he had a principal share. In these various papers he steadily advocated what was then called the Whig cause, being attached to the principles of the Revolution, and the royal family of Brunswick, or, in other words, a person well affected to Church and State. His zeal was long unnoticed, while far inferior writers were enriched out of the secret-service-money with unexampled prodigality. At length, in 1749, he received a small pension, together with the then disreputable office of a Justice of Peace for Westminster and Middlesex, of which he was at liberty to make the best he could by the worst means he might choose. This office, such as it was, he owed to the interference of Mr. afterwards Lord Lyttleton.

At this period, the Magistrates of Westminster, thence termed Trading Justices, were repaid by fees for their services to the public; a mean and wretched system, which made it the interest of these functionaries to inflame every petty dispute which was brought before them, to trade, as it were, in guilt and in misery, and to wring their precarious subsistence out of thieves and pickpockets. The habits of Fielding, never choice or select in his society, were not improved by that to which his place exposed him. Horace Walpole gives us, in his usual unfeeling, but lively manner, the following description of a visit made to Fielding in his capacity of a Justice, by which we see his mind had stooped itself completely to his situation.

"Rigby gave me as strong a picture of nature. He and Peter Bathurst, t'other night, carried a servant of the latter's, who had attempted to shoot him, before Fielding, who, to all his other avocations, has, by the grace of Mr. Littleton, added that of Middlesex justice. He sent them word he was at supper,—they must come next morning. They did not understand that freedom, and ran up, where they found him banqueting with a blind man [Fielding's

brother probably], and three Irishmen, on some cold mutton, and a bone of ham, both in one dish, and the dirtiest cloth. He never stirred, or asked them to sit. Rigby, who had seen him come so often to beg a guinea of Sir C. Williams, and Bathurst, at whose father's he had lived for victuals, understood that dignity as little, and pulled themselves chairs, on which he civilized." *

This is a humiliating anecdote, even after we have made allowance for the aristocratic exaggeration of Walpole, who, in acknowledging Fielding's talents elsewhere, has not failed to stigmatize the lowness of his society and habits.† Yet it is consoling to observe, that Fielding's principles remained unshaken, though the circumstances attending his official situation tended to increase the careless disrespectability of his private habits. His own account of his conduct respecting the fees of the office on which he depended for subsistence, has never been denied or doubted. "I will confess," says he, "that my private affairs, at the beginning of the winter, had but a gloomy aspect; for I had not plundered the public, or the poor, of those sums which men, who are always ready to plunder both as much as they can, have been pleased to suspect me of taking; on the contrary, by composing, instead of inflaming, the quarrels of porters and beggars (which, I blush when I say, hath not been universally practised), and by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another left, I had reduced an income of about 500*l.* a-year, of the dirtiest money upon earth, to little more than 300*l.*; a considerable portion of which remained with my clerk."

Besides the disinterestedness, of which he set an example unusual in those days, Fielding endeavoured, by various suggestions, to abridge the catalogue of crimes and depravity which his office placed so closely under his eye. His "Inquiry into the Increase of Thieves and Robbers," contains several hints which have been adopted by succeeding statesmen, and some which are still worthy of more attention than they have yet received. As a magistrate, indeed, he was desirous of retrieving the dignity and independence of his own office; and his zeal on that subject has led him a little farther than he will be followed by the friends of rational freedom. But we cannot omit mentioning, that he was the first to touch on the frequency of pardons, rendered necessary by the multiplication of capital punishments, and that he placed his finger on that swelling imposthume of the state, the poor's-rates, which has wrought so much evil, and is likely to

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* Letters from the Hon. Horace Walpole to George Montague, Esq.

† In his poetical account of Twickenham, Fielding's residence in the neighbourhood is not forgotten,—

> Where Fielding met his bunter muse,
> And as they quaff'd the fiery juice,
> Droll nature stamp'd each lucky hit,
> With unimaginable wit.
>
> *The Parish Registrar of Twickenham.*

work so much more. He published also a "Charge to the Grand Jury of Middlesex," some "Tracts Concerning Law Trials" of importance, and left behind him a manuscript on Crown Law. On the subject of the poor, he afterwards published a scheme for restricting them to their parishes, and providing for them in workhouses, which, like many others which have since appeared, only showed that he was fully sensible of the evil, without being able to suggest an effectual or practical remedy. A subsequent writer on the same thorny subject, Sir Frederick Morton Eden, observes, that Fielding's treatise exhibits both the knowledge of the magistrate, and the energy and expression of the novel writer. It was, however, before publishing his scheme for the provision of the poor, that he made himself immortal by the production of "Tom Jones."

The "History of a Foundling" was composed under all the disadvantages incident to an author alternately pressed by the disagreeable task of his magisterial duties, and by the necessity of hurrying out some ephemeral essay or pamphlet to meet the demands of the passing day. It is inscribed to the Hon. Mr. Lyttleton, afterwards Lord Lyttleton, with a dedication, in which he intimates, that without his assistance, and that of the Duke of Bedford, the work had never been completed, as the author had been indebted to them for the means of subsistence while engaged in composing it. Ralph Allen, the friend of Pope, is also alluded to as one of his benefactors, but unnamed, by his own desire; thus confirming the truth of Pope's beautiful couplet—

> Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
> Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.

It is said that this munificent and modest patron made Fielding a present of 200*l.* at one time, and that even before he was personally acquainted with him.

Under such precarious circumstances the first English novel was given to the public, which had not yet seen any works of fiction founded upon the plan of painting from nature. Even Richardson's novels are but a step from the old romance, approaching, indeed more nearly to the ordinary course of events, but still dealing in improbable incidents, and in characters swelled out beyond the ordinary limits of humanity. The "History of a Foundling" is truth and human nature itself, and there lies the inestimable advantage which it possesses over all previous fictions of this particular kind. It was received with unanimous acclamation by the public, and proved so productive to Millar the publisher, that he handsomely added 100*l.* to 600*l.*, for which last sum he had purchased the work.

The general merits of this popular and delightful work have been so often dwelt upon, and its imperfections so frequently censured, that we can do little more than hastily run over ground which has been repeatedly occupied. The felicitous contrivance, and happy extrication of the story, where every incident tells upon and advances the cata-

strophe, while, at the same time, it illustrates the characters of those interested in its approach, cannot too often be mentioned with the highest approbation. The attention of the reader is never diverted or puzzled by unnecessary digressions, or recalled to the main story by abrupt and startling recurrences; he glides down the narrative like a boat on the surface of some broad navigable stream, which only winds enough to gratify the voyager with the varied beauty of its banks One exception to this praise, otherwise so well merited, occurs in the story of the "Old Man of the Hill;" an episode, which, in compliance with a custom introduced by Cervantes, and followed by Le Sage, Fielding has thrust into the midst of his narrative, as he had formerly introduced the history of Leonora, equally unnecessarily and inartificially, into that of "Joseph Andrews." It has also been wondered, why Fielding should have chosen to leave the stain of illegitimacy on the birth of his hero; and it has been surmised, that he did so in allusion to his own first wife, who was also a natural child. A better reason may be discovered in the story itself; for had Miss Bridget been privately married to the father of Tom Jones, there could have been no adequate motive assigned for keeping his birth secret from a man so reasonable and compassionate as Allworthy.

But even the high praise due to the construction and arrangement of the story, is inferior to that claimed by the truth, force, and spirit of the characters, from Tom Jones himself, down to Black George the game-keeper, and his family. Amongst these, Squire Western stands alone; imitated from no prototype, and in himself an inimitable picture of ignorance, prejudice, irascibility, and rusticity, united with natural shrewdness, constitutional good-humour, and an instinctive affection for his daughter,—all which qualities, good and bad, are grounded upon that basis of thorough selfishness, natural to one bred up, from infancy, where no one dared to contradict his arguments, or to control his conduct. In one incident alone, Fielding has departed from this admirable sketch. As an English squire, Western ought not to have taken a beating so unresistingly from the friend of Lord Fellamar. We half suspect that the passage is an interpolation. It is inconsistent with the Squire's readiness to engage in rustic affrays. We grant a pistol or sword might have appalled him; but Squire Western should have yielded to no one in the use of the English horsewhip; and as, with all his brutalities, we have a sneaking interest in the honest jolly country gentleman, we would willingly hope there is some mistake in this matter.

The character of Jones, otherwise a model of generosity, openness, and manly spirit, mingled with thoughtless dissipation, is, in like manner, unnecessarily degraded by the nature of his intercourse with Lady Bellaston; and this is one of the circumstances which incline us to believe, that Fielding's ideas of what was gentleman-like and honourable had sustained some depreciation, in consequence of the unhappy circumstances of his life, and of the society to which they condemned him.

A more sweeping and general objection was made against the "History of a Foundling" by the admirers of Richardson, and has been often repeated since. It is alleged, that the ultimate moral of "Tom Jones," which conducts to happiness, and holds up to our sympathy and esteem, a youth who gives way to licentious habits, is detrimental to society, and tends to encourage the youthful reader in the practice of those follies, to which his natural passions, and the usual course of the world, but too much direct him. French delicacy, which, on so many occasions, has strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel, saw this fatal tendency in the work, and by an *arrêt* prohibited the circulation of a bungled abridgment by De Laplace, entitled a translation. To this charge Fielding himself might probably have replied, that the vices into which Jones suffers himself to fall, are made the direct cause of placing him in the distressful situation, which he occupies during the greater part of the narrative; while his generosity, his charity, and his amiable qualities, become the means of saving him from the consequences of his folly. But we suspect with Dr. Johnson, that there is something of cant both in the objection, and in the answer to it. "Men," says that moralist, "will not become highwaymen, because Macheath is acquitted on the stage;" and we add, they will not become swindlers and thieves, because they sympathize with the fortunes of the witty picaroon Gil Blas, or licentious debauchées, because they read "Tom Jones." The professed moral of a piece is usually what the reader is least interested in; it is like the mendicant, who cripples after some splendid and gay procession, and in vain solicits the attention of those who have been gazing upon it. Excluding from consideration those infamous works, which address themselves directly to awakening the grosser passions of our nature, we are inclined to think, the worst evil to be apprehended from the perusal of novels is, that the habit is apt to generate an indisposition to real history, and useful literature; and that the best which can be hoped is, that they may sometimes instruct the youthful mind by real pictures of life, and sometimes awaken their better feelings and sympathies by strains of generous sentiment, and tales of fictitious woe. Beyond this point they are a mere elegance, a luxury contrived for the amusement of polished life, and the gratification of that half love of literature, which pervades all ranks in an advanced stage of society, and are read much more for amusement, than with the least hope of deriving instruction from them. The vices and follies of Tom Jones, are those which the world soon teaches to all who enter on the career of life, and to which society is unhappily but too indulgent; nor do we believe, that, in any one instance, the perusal of Fielding's Novel has added one libertine to the large list, who would not have been such, had it never crossed the press. And it is with concern we add our sincere belief, that the fine picture of frankness and generosity, exhibited in that fictitious character, has had as few imitators as the career of his follies. Let it not be supposed that we are indifferent to morality, because we treat with scorn

that affectation, which, while, in common life, it connives at the open practice of libertinism, pretends to detest the memory of an author, who painted life as it was, with all its shades, and more than all the lights which it occasionally exhibits, to relieve them. For particular passages of the work, the author can only be defended under the custom of his age, which permitted, in certain cases, much stronger language than ours. He has himself said, that there is nothing which can offend the chastest eye in the perusal; and he spoke probably according to the ideas of his time. But in modern estimation, there are several passages at which delicacy may justly take offence; and we can only say, that they may be termed rather jocularly coarse than seductive; and that they are atoned for by the admirable mixture of wit and argument, by which, in others, the cause of true religion and virtue is supported and advanced.

Fielding considered his works as an experiment in British literature; and, therefore, he chose to prefix a preliminary Chapter to each Book, explanatory of his own views, and of the rules attached to this mode of composition. Those critical introductions, which rather interrupt the course of the story, and the flow of the interest at the first perusal, are found, on a second or third, the most entertaining chapters of the whole work.

The publication of "Tom Jones" carried Fielding's fame to its height; but seems to have been attended with no consequences to his fortune, beyond the temporary relief which the copy-money afforded him. It was after this period, that he published his proposal for making an effectual Provision for the Poor, formerly noticed, and a pamphlet relating to the mysterious case of the celebrated Elizabeth Canning, in which he adopted the cause of common sense against popular prejudice, and failed in consequence in the object of his publication.

"Amelia" was the author's last work of importance. It may be termed a continuation of "Tom Jones;" but we have not the same sympathy for the ungrateful and dissolute conduct of Booth, which we yield to the youthful follies of Jones. The character of Amelia is said to have been drawn for Fielding's second wife. If he put her patience, as has been alleged, to tests of the same kind, he has, in some degree, repaid her, by the picture he has drawn of her feminine delicacy and pure tenderness. Fielding's Novels show few instances of pathos; it was, perhaps, inconsistent with the life which he was compelled to lead; for those who see most of human misery become necessarily, in some degree hardened to its effects. But few scenes of fictitious distress are more affecting, than that in which Amelia is described as having made her little preparations for the evening, and sitting in anxious expectation of the return of her unworthy husband, whose folly is, in the meantime, preparing for her new scenes of misery. But our sympathy for the wife is disturbed by our dislike of her unthankful helpmate, of whose conversion we have no hope, and with whose errors we have no sympathy. The tale is,

therefore, on the whole, unpleasing, even though relieved by the humours of the doughty Colonel Bath, and the learned Dr. Harrison, characters drawn with such force and precision, as Fielding alone knew how to employ.

Millar published "Amelia" in 1751. He had paid a thousand pounds for the copyright; and when he began to suspect that the work would be judged inferior to its predecessor, he employed the following stratagem to push it upon the trade. At a sale made to the booksellers, previous to the publication, Millar offered his friends his other publications on the usual terms of discount; but when he came to "Amelia," he laid it aside, as a work expected to be in such demand, that he could not afford to deliver it to the trade in the usual manner. The ruse succeeded—the impression was anxiously bought up, and a bookseller relieved from every apprehension of a slow sale.

Notwithstanding former failures, Fielding, in 1752, commenced a new attempt at a literary newspaper and review, which he entitled the *Covent Garden Journal*, to be published twice a-week, and conducted by Sir Alexander Drawcansir. It was the author's failing, that he could not continue any plan of this nature (for which otherwise his ready pen, sharp wit, and classical knowledge, so highly fitted him), without involving himself in some of the party squabbles, or petty literary broils, of the day. On the present occasion, it was not long ere he involved himself in a quarrel with Dr. Hill, and other periodical writers. Among the latter, we are sorry to particularize Smollett, although possessed of the most kindred genius to Fielding's which has yet appeared in British literature. The warfare was of brief duration, and neither party would obtain honour by an inquiry into the cause or conduct of its hostilities.

Meanwhile, Fielding's life was fast decaying; a complication of diseases had terminated in a dropsical habit, which totally undermined his strong constitution. The Duke of Newcastle, then prime minister, was desirous of receiving assistance from him in the formation of a plan for the remedy and prevention of secret robberies, and improving the police of the metropolis. For the small consideration of 600*l.*, paid by government, Fielding engaged to extirpate several gangs of daring ruffians, which at this time infested London, and its vicinity; and though his health was reduced to the last extremity, he continued himself to superintend the conduct of his agents, to take evidence, and make commitments, until this great object was attained.

These last exertions seem to have been fatal to his exhausted frame, which suffered at once under dropsy, and jaundice, and asthma. The Bath waters were tried in vain, and various modes of cure or alleviation were resorted to, of which tapping only appears to have succeeded to a certain extent. The medical attendants gave their last sad advice in recommending a milder climate. Of his departure for

Lisbon, in conformity with their opinion, he has himself left the following melancholy record, painting the man and his situation a thousand times better than any other pen can achieve.

"On this day, Wednesday, June 26, 1754,"* he says, "the most melancholy sun I had ever beheld arose, and found me awake at my house at Fordhook. By the light of this sun, I was, in my own opinion, last to behold and take leave of some of those creatures on whom I doated with a mother-like fondness, guided by nature and passion, and uncured and unhardened by all the doctrine of that philosophical school, where I had learned to bear pains, and to despise death. In this situation, as I could not conquer Nature, I submitted entirely to her, and she made as great a fool of me, as she had ever done of any woman whatsoever; under pretence of giving me leave to enjoy, she drew me in to suffer, the company of my little ones, during eight hours; and I doubt not whether, in that time, I did not undergo more than in all my distemper. At twelve precisely my coach was at the door, which was no sooner told me, than I kissed my children round, and went into it with some little resolution. My wife, who behaved more like a heroine and philosopher, though at the same time the tenderest mother in the world, and my eldest daughter, followed me. Some friends went with us, and others here took their leave; and I heard my behaviour applauded, with many murmurs and praises, to which I well knew I had no title."

This affecting passage makes a part of his "Journey to Lisbon," a work which he commenced during the voyage, with a hand trembling in almost its latest hour. It remains a singular example of Fielding's natural strength of mind, that while struggling hard at once with the depression and with the irritability of disease, he could still exhibit a few flashes of that bright wit, which once set the "world" in a roar. His perception of character, and power of describing it, had not forsaken him in those sad moments; for the master of the ship in which he sailed, the scolding landlady of the Isle of Wight, the military coxcomb who visits their vessel, are all portraits, marked with the master-hand which traced Parson Adams and Squire Western.

The "Journey to Lisbon" was abridged by fate. Fielding reached that city, indeed, alive, and remained there two months; but he was unable to continue his proposed literary labours. The hand of death was upon him, and seized upon its prey in the beginning of October, 1754. He died in the forty-eighth year of his life, leaving behind him a widow, and four children, one of whom died soon afterwards. His brother, Sir John Fielding, well known as a magistrate, aided by the bounty of Mr. Allen, made suitable provision for the survivors; but of their fate we are ignorant.

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* Voyage to Lisbon.

Thus lived, and thus died, at a period of life when the world might have expected continued delight from his matured powers, the celebrated Henry Fielding, father of the English Novel; and in his powers of strong and national humour, and forcible yet natural exhibition of character, unapproached as yet, even by his successful followers.

ABBOTSFORD, *October* 25, 1820.

BATTERSEA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

TOBIAS SMOLLETT.

THE Life of SMOLLETT, whose genius has raised an imperishable monument to his fame, has been written, with spirit and elegance, by his friend and contemporary, the celebrated Dr. Moore, and more lately by Dr. Robert Anderson of Edinburgh, with a careful research, which leaves to us little except the task of selection and abridgment.

Our author was descended from an ancient and honourable family; an advantage to which, from various passages in his writings, he seems to have attached considerable weight, and the consciousness of which seems to have contributed its share in forming some of the peculiarities of his character.

Sir James Smollett of Bonhill, the grandfather of the celebrated author, was bred to the bar, became one of the Commissaries (*i.e.* Consistorial Judges) of Edinburgh, represented the burgh of Dumbarton in the Scottish Parliament, and lent his aid to dissolve that representative body for ever, being one of the Commissioners for framing the Union with England. By his lady, a daughter of Sir Aulay McAulay of Ardincaple, Sir James Smollett had four sons, of whom Archibald, the youngest, was father of the poet.

It appears that Archibald Smollett followed no profession, and that, without his father's consent, he married an amiable woman, Barbara, daughter of Mr. Cunningham of Gilbertfield. The disunion betwixt the son and father, to which this act of imprudence gave rise, did not prevent Sir James Smollett from assigning to him, for his support, the house and farm of Dalquhurn, near his own mansion of Bonhill. Archibald Smollett died early, leaving two sons and a daughter wholly dependent on the kindness of his grandfather. The eldest son embraced the military life, and perished by the shipwreck of a transport. The daughter, Jane, married Mr. Telfer of Leadhills, and her descendant, Captain John Smollett, R.N., now represents the family, and possesses the estate of Bonhill. The second son of Archibald Smollett is the subject of this Memoir.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT (baptized Tobias George) was born in 1721, in the old house of Dalquhurn, in the valley of Leven, in perhaps the most beautiful district in Britain. Its distinguished native has celebrated the vale of Leven not only in the beautiful Ode addressed to his parent stream, but in the "Expedition of Humphrey Clinker," where he mentions the home of his forefathers in the following enthusiastic, yet not exaggerated terms:—"A very little above the source of the

Leven, on the lake, stands the house of Cameron, belonging to Mr. Smollett,* so embosomed in an oak wood, that we did not see it till we were within fifty yards of the door. The lake approaches on one side to within six or seven yards of the window. It might have been placed in a higher situation, which would have afforded a more extensive prospect, and a drier atmosphere; but this imperfection is not chargeable on the present proprietor, who purchased it ready built, rather than be at the trouble of repairing his own family-house of Bonhill, which stands two miles from hence on the Leven, so surrounded with plantations, that it used to be known by the name of the Mavis (or thrush) Nest. Above that house is a romantic glen, or cleft of a mountain, covered with hanging woods, having at bottom a stream of fine water that forms a number of cascades in its descent to join the Leven, so that the scene is quite enchanting.

"I have seen the Lago di Gardi, Albano de Vico, Bolsena, and Geneva, and I prefer Loch-Lomond to them all; a preference which is certainly owing to the verdant islands that seem to float upon its surface, affording the most enchanting objects of repose to the excursive view. Nor are the banks destitute of beauties, which even partake of the sublime. On this side they display a sweet variety of woodland, cornfields, and pasture, with several agreeable villas, emerging, as it were, out of the lake: till at some distance, the prospect terminates in huge mountains, covered with heath, which, being in the bloom, affords a very rich covering of purple. Everything here is romantic beyond imagination. This country is justly styled the Arcadia of Scotland: I do not doubt but it may vie with Arcadia in everything but climate. I am sure it excels it in verdure, wood, and water."

A poet bred up amongst such scenes, must become doubly attached to his art; and accordingly it appears that Smollett was in the highest degree sensible of the beauties of nature, although his fame has chiefly risen upon his power of delineating human character. He obtained the rudiments of classical knowledge at the Dumbarton grammar-school, then taught by Mr. John Love, the scarce less learned antagonist of the learned Ruddiman. From thence he removed to Glasgow, where he pursued his studies with diligence and success, and was finally bound apprentice to Mr. John Gordon, an eminent surgeon. This destination was contrary to young Smollett's wishes, which strongly determined him to a military life; and he is supposed to have avenged himself both of his grandfather, who contradicted his inclinations, and of his master, by describing the former under the unamiable character of the old Judge, and the latter as Mr. Potion, the first master of "Roderick Random." At a later period he did Mr. Gordon justice by mentioning him in the following terms:—"I was introduced to Mr. Gordon," says Matthew Bramble, "a patriot of a truly noble

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* Commissary Smollett.

spirit, who is father of the linen manufactory in that place, and was the great promoter of the city workhouse, infirmary, and other works of public utility. Had he lived in ancient Rome, he would have been honoured with a statue at the public expense."

During his apprenticeship, Smollett's conduct indicated that love of frolic, practical jest, and playful mischief, of which his works show many proofs, and the young novelist gave also several indications of his talents and propensity to satire. It is said, that his master expressed his conviction of Smollett's future eminence in very homely but expressive terms, when some of his neighbours were boasting the superior decorum and propriety of their young pupils. "It may be all very true," said the keen-sighted Mr. Gordon; "but give me, before them all, my own bubbly-nosed callant, with the stane in his pouch." Without attempting to render this into English, our Southern readers must be informed, that the words contain a faithful sketch of a negligent, unlucky, but spirited urchin, never without some mischievous prank in his head, and a stone in his pocket ready to execute it.

In the eighteenth year of Smollett's life, his grandfather, Sir James, died, making no provision by his will for the children of his youngest son, a neglect which, joined to other circumstances already mentioned, procured him from his irritable descendant the painful distinction which the old Judge holds in the narrative of "Roderick Random."

Without efficient patronage of any kind, Smollett, in his nineteenth year, went to London to seek his fortune wherever he might find it. He carried with him the "Regicide," a tragedy, written during the progress of his studies, but which, though it evinces in particular passages the genius of the author, cannot be termed with justice a performance suited for the stage. Lord Lyttleton, as a patron—Garrick and Lacy, as managers—gave the youthful author some encouragement, which, perhaps, the sanguine temper of Smollett overrated; for, in the story of Mr. Melopoyn, where he gives the history of his attempts to bring the "Regicide" on the stage, the patron and the manager are not spared; and, in "Peregrine Pickle," the personage of Gosling Scrag, which occurs in the first edition only, is meant to represent Lord Lyttleton. The story is more briefly told in the preface to the first edition of the "Regicide," where the author informs us that his tragedy "was taken into the protection of one of those little fellows who are sometimes called great men, and, like other orphans, neglected accordingly. Stung with resentment, which I mistook for contempt, I resolved to punish this barbarous indifference, and actually discarded my patron, consoling myself with the barren praise of a few associates, who, in the most indefatigable manner, employed their time and influence in collecting from all quarters observations on my piece, which, in consequence of those suggestions, put on a new appearance almost every day, until my occasions called me out of the kingdom."

Disappointed in the hopes he had founded on in his theatrical attempt, Smollett accepted the situation of surgeon's mate on board of a ship of the line, in the expedition to Carthagena, in 1741, of which

he published a short account in "Roderick Random," and a longer narrative in a "Compendium of Voyages," published in 1751. But the term of our author's service in the navy was chiefly remarkable from his having acquired, in that brief space, such intimate knowledge of our nautical world, as enabled him to describe sailors with such truth and spirit of delineation, that from that time whoever has undertaken the same task has seemed to copy more from Smollett than from nature. Our author quitted the navy, in disgust alike with the drudgery, and with the despotic discipline, which in those days was qualified by no urbanity on the part of superior officers, and which exposed subordinates in the service to such mortifications, as a haughty spirit like that of Smollett could very ill endure. He left the service in the West Indies, and after a residence of some time in the island of Jamaica, returned to England in 1746. Obscure traces of the vexatious persecutions which he underwent during his service in the navy, may be found in "Roderick Random;" but the temper of the author was too irritable to encourage our full confidence in the truth of his satire.

It was at this time, when, incensed at the brutal severities exercised by the government's troops in the Highlands, to which romantic regions he was a neighbour by birth, Smollett wrote the pathetic, spirited, and patriotic verses entitled "The Tears of Caledonia." The late Robert Graham, Esq., of Gartmore, a particular friend and trustee of Smollett, has recorded the manner in which this effusion was poured forth. "Some gentlemen having met at a tavern were amusing themselves before supper with a game at cards; while Smollett, not choosing to play, sat down to write. One of the company, who also was nominated by him one of his trustees (Gartmore himself), observing his earnestness, and supposing he was writing verses, asked him if it was not so. He accordingly read them the first sketch of his "Tears of Scotland," consisting only of six stanzas; and on their remarking that the termination of the poem, being too strongly expressed, might give offence to persons whose political opinions were different, he sat down, without reply, and with an air of great indignation, subjoined the concluding stanza:—

While the warm blood bedews my veins,
And unimpair'd remembrance reigns,
Resentment of my Country's fate
Within my filial breast shall beat.
Yes, spite of thine insulting foe,
My sympathizing verse shall flow.
Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn,
Thy banish'd peace, thy laurels torn!

To estimate the generous emotions with which Smollett was actuated on this occasion, it must be remarked that his patriotism was independent of party feeling, as he had been bred up in Whig principles, which were those of his family; and although these appear from his historical work to have been in some degree modified, yet the author

continued attached to the principles of the Revolution. It is also to be remembered, that at the extinction of a civil war, the least appearance of sympathy with the vanquished party is sure to interrupt fairer prospects of preferment than any which opened to Smollett. His feelings for his country's distresses, and his resentment of the injuries she sustained, were as genuine and disinterested as the mode of expressing them is pathetic and spirited.

Smollett, on his return from the West Indies, settled in London, and commenced his career as a professional man. He was not successful as a physician, probably because his independent and haughty spirit neglected the by-paths which lead to fame in that profession. One account says, that he failed to render himself agreeable to his female patients, certainly not from want of address or figure, for both were remarkably pleasing, but more probably by a hasty impatience of listening to petty complaints, and a want of sympathy with the lamentations of those who laboured under no real indisposition. It is remarkable, that although very many, perhaps the greatest number of successful medical men, have assumed a despotic authority over their patients after their character was established, few or none have risen to pre-eminence in practice who used the same want of ceremony in the commencement of their career. Perhaps, however, Dr. Smollett was too soon discouraged, and abandoned prematurely a profession in which success is proverbially slow.

Smollett, who must have felt his own powers, had naturally recourse to his pen, to supply the deficiencies of an income which his practice did not afford; and besides repeated attempts to get his tragedy acted, he sent forth, in 1746, "Advice," and in 1747, "Reproof," both poetical satires possessed of considerable merit, but which only influenced the fate of the author, as they increased the number of his personal enemies. Rich, the manager, was particularly satirized in "Reproof." Smollett had written for the Covent Garden Theatre an opera called "Alceste," which was not acted in consequence of some quarrel betwixt the author and manager, which Smollett thus avenged.

About 1747, Smollett was married to Miss Lascelles, a beautiful and accomplished woman, to whom he had become attached in the West Indies. Instead of an expected fortune of 3000*l.*, he gained by this connexion only a lawsuit, and increased the expense of housekeeping, which he was still less able to afford, and was again obliged to have recourse to his literary talents.

Necessity is the mother of invention in literature as well as in the arts, and the necessity of Smollett brought him forth in his pre-eminent character of a Novelist. "Roderick Random" may be considered as an imitation of Le Sage, as the hero flits through almost every scene of public and private life, recording, as he paints his own adventures, the manners of the times, with all their various shades and diversities of colouring; but forming no connected plot or story, the several parts of which hold connexion with, or bear proportion to, each other. It was the second example of the minor romance, or

English novel. Fielding had shortly before set the example in his "Tom Jones," and a rival of almost equal eminence, in 1748, brought forth the "Adventures of Roderick Random;" a work which was eagerly received by the public, and brought both reputation and profit to the author.

It was generally believed that Smollett painted some of his own early adventures under the veil of fiction; but the public carried the spirit of applying the characters of a work of fiction to living personages much farther perhaps than the author intended. Gawkey, Crabbe, and Potion, were assigned to individuals in the West of Scotland; Mrs. Smollett was supposed to be Narcissa; the author himself represented Roderick Random (of which there can be little doubt); a bookbinder and barber, the early acquaintances of Smollett, contended for the character of the attached, amiable, simple-hearted Strap; and the two naval officers, under whom Smollett had served, were stigmatized under the names of Oakum and Whiffle. Certain it is, that the contempt with which his unfortunate play had been treated forms the basis of Mr. Melopoyn's story, in which Garrick and Lyttleton are roughly treated under the characters of Marmozet and Sheerwit. The public did not taste less keenly the real merits of this interesting and humorous work, because they conceived it to possess the zest arising from personal allusion; and the sale of the work exceeded greatly the expectations of all concerned.

Having now the ear of the public, Smollett published, by subscription, his unfortunate tragedy, the "Regicide," in order to shame those who had barred his access to the stage. The preface is filled with complaints, which are neither just nor manly, and with strictures upon Garrick and Lyttleton, which amount almost to abuse. The merits of the piece by no means vindicate this extreme resentment on the part of the author, and of this Smollett himself became at length sensible. He was impetuous, but not sullen in his resentment, and generously allowed, in his "History of England," the full merit to those, whom, in the first impulse of passion and disappointment, he had treated with injustice.*

In 1750, Smollett made a tour to Paris, where he gleaned materials for future works of fiction, besides enlarging his acquaintance with life and manners. A coxcomb painter, whom he met on this occasion, formed the original of the exquisite Pallet; while Dr. Akenside, a man

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* Desirous "of doing justice in a work of truth for wrongs done in a work of fiction," (to use his own expression,) in giving a sketch of the liberal arts in his "History of England," he remarked, the "exhibitions of the stage were improved to the most exquisite entertainment by the talents and management of Garrick, who greatly surpassed all his predecessors of this, and perhaps every other nation, in his genius for acting, in the sweetness and variety of his tones, the irresistible magic of his eye, the fire and vivacity of his action, the elegance of attitude and the whole pathos of expression.

"Candidates for literary fame appeared even in the higher sphere of life em-

of a very different character, was marked the future prey of satire as the pedantic Doctor of Medicine. He is said to have offended Smollett by some national reflections on Scotland, while his extravagant zeal for liberty, which was in no great danger, and his pedantic and exclusive admiration of the manners of classical antiquity, afforded, as Smollett has drawn them, an ample fund of ridicule.

"Peregrine Pickle" is supposed to have been written chiefly in Paris, and appeared in 1751. It was received by the public with uncommon avidity, and a large impression dispersed, notwithstanding the efforts of certain booksellers and others, whom Smollett accuses of attempts to obstruct the sale, the book being published on account of the author himself. His irritable temper induced him to run hastily before the public with complaints, which, howsoever well or ill grounded, the public has been at all times accustomed to hear with great indifference. Many professional authors, philosophers, and other public characters of the time, were also satirized with little restraint.

The splendid merits of the work itself were a much greater victory over the author's enemies, if he really had such, than any which he could gain by personal altercation with unworthy opponents. Yet by many his second novel was not thought quite equal to his first. In truth, there occurs betwixt "Roderick Random" and "Peregrine Pickle" a difference, which is often observed betwixt the first and second efforts of authors who have been successful in this line. "Peregrine Pickle" is more finished, more sedulously laboured into excellence, exhibits scenes of more accumulated interest, and presents a richer variety of character and adventure than "Roderick Random;" but yet there is an ease and simplicity in the first novel which is not

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bellished by the nervous sense and extensive erudition of a Corke, by the delicate taste, the polished muse, and tender feelings of a Lyttleton."

Not satisfied with this *public* declaration of his sentiments, he wrote in still stronger terms to Mr. Garrick:

"DEAR SIR, Chelsea, *Jan.* 27, 1762.

"I this morning received your "Winter's Tale," and am agreeably flattered by this mark of your attention. What I have said of Mr. Garrick in the History of England, was, I protest, the language of my heart. I shall rejoice if he thinks I have done him barely justice. I am sure the public will think I have done him no more than justice. In giving a short sketch of the liberal arts, I could not with any propriety, forbear mentioning a gentleman so eminently distinguished by a genius that has no rival. Besides, I thought it was a duty incumbent on me in particular, to make a public atonement in a work of truth for wrongs done him in a work of fiction.

"Among the other inconveniences arising from ill-health, I deeply regret my being disabled from a personal cultivation of your good will, and the unspeakable enjoyment I should sometimes derive from your private conversation, as well as from the public exertion of your talents; but sequestered as I am from the world of entertainment, the consciousness of standing well in your opinion will ever afford singular satisfaction to,

"Dear Sir,

"Your very humble Servant,

"T. SMOLLETT."

quite attained in the second, where the author has substituted splendid colouring for strict fidelity of outline. Thus, of the inimitable sea-characters, Trunnion, Pipes, and even Hatchway, border upon caricature; but Lieutenant Bowling and Jack Rattlin are truth and nature itself. The reason seems to be, that when an author brings forth his first representation of any class of characters, he seizes on the leading and striking outlines, and therefore, in the second attempt of the same kind, he is forced to make some distinction, and either to invest his personage with less obvious and ordinary traits of character, or to place him in a new and less natural light. Hence, it would seem, the difference in opinion which sometimes occurs betwixt the author and the reader, respecting the comparative value of early and of subsequent publications. The author naturally esteems that most upon which he is conscious much more labour has been bestowed, while the public often remain constant to their first love, and prefer the facility and truth of the earlier work to the more elaborate execution displayed in those which follow it. But though the simplicity of its predecessor was not, and could not be, repeated in Smollett's second novel, his powers are so far from evincing any falling off, that in "Peregrine Pickle" there is a much wider range of character and incident than is exhibited in "Roderick Random," as well as a more rich and brilliant display of the talents and humour of the distinguished author.

"Peregrine Pickle" did not, however, owe its success entirely to its intrinsic merit. The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, a separate tale, thrust into the work, with which it has no sort of connexion, in the manner introduced by Cervantes, and followed by Le Sage and Fielding, added considerably to its immediate popularity. These Memoirs, which are now regarded as a tiresome and unnecessary excrescence upon the main story, contain the history of Lady Vane, renowned at that time for her beauty and her intrigues.* The lady not only furnished Smollett with the materials for recording her own infamy, but, it is said, rewarded him handsomely for the insertion of her story. Mr. MacKercher, a character of a different description, was also introduced. He was remarkable for the benevolent Quixotry with which he supported the pretensions of the unfortunate Mr. Annesley, a claimant of the title and property of Anglesea. The public took the interest in the frailties of Lady Vane, and the benevolence of Mr. MacKercher, which they always take in the history of living and remarkable characters: and the anecdotes respecting the demirep and the man of charity, greatly promoted the instant popularity of "Peregrine Pickle."

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* Lady Vane was the daughter of Francis Hawes, Esq., Purley-Hall, near Reading, in Berkshire, one of the South-Sea Directors in 1720, and married, about the beginning of 1732, at the age of seventeen, to Lord William Hamilton, who dying July 11, 1734, she married, May 19, 1735, Lord Viscount Vane of the kingdom of Ireland, with whom she had various scandalous lawsuits, and died in London, March 31, 1788, in the seventy-second year of her life.

The extreme licence of some of the scenes described in this novel gave deep offence to the thinking part of the public; and the work, in conformity to their just complaints, was much altered in the second edition. The preliminary advertisement has these words:—"It was the author's duty, as well as his interest, to oblige the public with this edition, which he has endeavoured to render less unworthy of their acceptance, by retrenching the superfluities of the first, reforming its manners, and correcting its expression. Divers uninteresting incidents are wholly suppressed; some humorous scenes he has endeavoured to heighten; and he flatters himself that he has expunged every adventure, phrase, and insinuation, that could be construed by the most delicate reader into a trespass upon the rules of decorum.

"He owns with contrition, that, in one or two instances, he gave way too much to the suggestions of personal resentment, and represented characters, as they appeared to him at the time, through the exaggerated medium of prejudice. But he has in this impression endeavoured to make atonement for these extravagances. Howsoever he may have erred in point of judgment or discretion, he defies the whole world to prove that he was ever guilty of one act of malice, ingratitude, or dishonour. This declaration he may be permitted to make without incurring the imputation of vanity or presumption, considering the numerous shafts of envy, rancour, and revenge, that have lately, both in public and private, been levelled at his reputation."

In reference to this palinode we may barely observe, that the passages retrenched in the second edition are, generally speaking, the detail of those frolics in which the author has permitted his turn for humour greatly to outrun his sense of decency and propriety; and, in this respect, notwithstanding what he himself says in the passage just quoted, the work would have been much improved by a more unsparing application of the pruning-knife. Several personal reflections were also omitted, particularly those on Lyttleton and Fielding, whom he had upbraided for his dependence on that statesman's patronage.

Dr. Anderson informs us, that "at this period, Smollett seems to have obtained the degree of Doctor of Physic, probably from a foreign University, and announced himself a candidate for fame and fortune as a physician, by a publication entitled, 'An Essay on the External Use of Water, in a Letter to Dr. ——, with particular Remarks upon the present Method of using the Mineral Waters at Bath in Somersetshire, and a Plan for rendering them more safe, agreeable, and efficacious; 4to, 1752.' The performance advanced his reputation as a man of science and taste, but failed to conduct the physician to professional eminence and wealth. This is the only publication in the line of his profession which is known to have proceeded from his pen." If the Essay was intended to serve as an introduction to practice, it was totally unsuccessful. Perhaps Smollett's character as a satirist, and the readiness he had shown to ingraft the peculiarities and history of individuals into works of fiction, were serious obstacles to him in a

profession which demands so much confidence as that of a family physician. But it is probable that the author's chief object in the publication was to assist the cause of a particular friend, Mr. Cleland, a surgeon at Bath, then engaged in a controversy concerning the use of these celebrated waters.

In the year 1753, Dr. Smollett published "The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom," one of those works which seem to have been writtten for the purpose of showing how far humour and genius can go in painting a complete picture of human depravity. Smollett has made his own defence for the loathsome task which he has undertaken. "Let me not," says he, in the dedication to Dr. —— (we are unable to supply the blank), "be condemned for having chosen my principal character from the purlieus of treachery and fraud, when I declare my purpose is to set him up as a beacon for the benefit of the inexperienced and unwary, who, from the perusal of these memoirs, may learn to avoid the manifold snares with which they are continually surrounded in the paths of life, while those who hesitate on the brink of iniquity may be terrified from plunging into that irremediable gulf, by surveying the deplorable fate of Ferdinand Count Fathom." But, while we do justice to the author's motives, we are obliged to deny the validity of his reasoning. To a reader of a good disposition and well-regulated mind, the picture of moral depravity presented in the character of Count Fathom is a disgusting pollution of the imagination. To those, on the other hand, who hesitate on the brink of meditated iniquity, it is not safe to detail the arts by which the ingenuity of villany has triumphed in former instances; and it is well known that the publication of the real account of uncommon crimes, although attended by the public and infamous punishment of the perpetrators, has often had the effect of stimulating others to similar actions. To some unhappy minds, it may occur as a sort of extenuation of the crime which they meditate, that even if they carry their purpose into execution, their guilt will fall far short of what the author has ascribed to his fictitious character; and there are other imaginations so ill regulated, that they catch infection from stories of wickedness, and feel an insane impulse to emulate and to realize the pictures of villany, which are embodied in such narratives as those of Zeluco or Count Fathom.

Condemning, however, the plan and tendency of the work, it is impossible to deny our applause to the wonderful knowledge of life and manners, which is evinced in the tale of "Count Fathom," as much as in any of Smollett's works. The horrible adventure in the hut of the robbers, is a tale of natural terror which rises into the sublime; and, though often imitated, has never yet been surpassed, or perhaps equalled. In "Count Fathom" also is to be found the first candid attempt to do justice to a calumniated race. The benevolent Jew of Cumberland had his prototype in the worthy Israelite, whom Smollett has introduced with very great effect into the history of "Fathom."

Shortly after this publication, Smollett's warmth of temper involved him in an unpleasant embarrassment. A person, called Peter Gordon, after having been saved by Smollett's humanity from imprisonment and ruin, and after having prevailed upon him to interpose his credit in his behalf to an inconvenient extent, withdrew within the verge of the court, set his creditors at defiance, and treated his benefactor with so much personal insolence, that Smollett chastised him by a beating. A prosecution was commenced by Gordon, and his counsel, Mr. Home Campbell, whether in indulgence of his natural rudeness and impetuosity, of which he had a great share, or whether moved by some special enmity against Smollett, opened the case with an unusual torrent of violence and misrepresentation. But the good sense and impartiality of the jury acquitted Smollett of the assault, and he was no sooner cleared of the charge than he sent an angry remonstrance to Mr. Home Campbell, demanding that he should retract what he had said to his disadvantage. It does not appear how the affair was settled. Besides that this expostulation was too long for the occasion, and far too violent to be dignified, Smollett imputed to Campbell the improbable charge, that he was desirous to revenge himself upon the author of "Ferdinand Count Fathom," because he had satirized the profession of the law. Lawyers are seldom very sensitive on this head, and if they were, they would have constant exercise for their irritability; since scarce a satirical author, of whatsoever description, has concluded his work, without giving cause to the gentlemen of the robe for some such offence, as Smollett supposes Campbell to have taken in the present instance. The manifesto of Smollett contains, however, some just censure on the prevailing mode in which witnesses are treated in the courts of justice in England, who, far from being considered as persons brought there to speak the truth in a matter wherein they have no concern, and who are therefore entitled to civil treatment, and to the protection of the court, on the contrary are often regarded as men standing forward to perjure themselves, and are therefore condemned beforehand to a species of moral pillory, where they are pelted with all the foul jests which the wit of their interrogators can suggest.

Smollett's next task was a new version of "Don Quixote," to which he was encouraged by a liberal subscription. The work was inscribed to Don Ricardo Wall, Principal Secretary of State to his most Catholic Majesty, by whom the undertaking had been encouraged. Smollett's version of this admirable classic is thus elegantly compared with those of Motteux (or Ozell) and of Jarvis, by the late ingenious and amiable Lord Woodhouselee, in his "Essay on the Principles of Translation."

"Smollett inherited from nature a strong sense of ridicule, a great fund of original humour, and a happy versatility of talent, by which he could accommodate his style to almost every species of writing. He could adopt, alternately, the solemn, the lively, the sarcastic, the burlesque, and the vulgar. To these qualifications, he joined an

inventive genius, and a vigorous imagination. As he possessed talents equal to the composition of original works of the same species with the romance of Cervantes; so it is not perhaps possible to conceive a writer more completely qualified to give a perfect translation of that novel.

"Motteux, with no great abilities as an original writer, appears to me to have been endowed with a strong perception of the ridiculous in human character, a just discernment of the weaknesses and follies of mankind. He seems likewise to have had a great command of the various styles which are accommodated to the expression both of grave burlesque, and of low humour. Inferior to Smollett in inventive genius, he seems to have equalled him in every quality which was essentially requisite to a translator of "Don Quixote." It may, therefore, be supposed, that the contest between them will be nearly equal, and the question of preference very difficult to be decided. It would have been so, had Smollett confided in his own strength, and bestowed on his task that time and labour which the length and difficulty of the work required; but Smollett too often wrote in such circumstances, that despatch was his primary object. He found various English translations at hand, which he judged might save him the labour of a new composition. Jarvis could give him faithfully the sense of his author; and it was necessary only to polish his asperities, and lighten his heavy and awkward phraseology. To contend with Motteux, Smollett found it necessary to assume the armour of Jarvis. This author had purposely avoided, through the whole of his work, the smallest coincidence of expression with Motteux, whom, with equal presumption and injustice, he accuses in his preface of having 'taken his version wholly from the French.' We find, therefore, both in the translation of Jarvis, and that of Smollett, which is little else than an improved edition of the former, that there is a studied rejection of the phraseology of Motteux. Now Motteux, though he has frequently assumed too great a licence, both in adding to, and retrenching from the ideas of his original, has, upon the whole, a very high degree of merit as a translator. In the adoption of corresponding idioms, he has been eminently fortunate; and, as in these there is no great latitude, he has, in general, preoccupied the appropriate phrases; so that a succeeding translator, who proceeded on the rule of invariably rejecting his phraseology, must have, in general, altered for the worse. Such, I have said, was the rule laid down by Jarvis, and by his copyist and improver, Smollett, who, by thus absurdly rejecting what his own judgment and taste must have approved, has produced a composition decidedly inferior, on the whole, to that of Motteux.

"Smollett was a good poet, and most of the verse translations, interspersed through this work, are executed with ability. It is on this head that Motteux has assumed to himself the greatest licence. He has very presumptuously mutilated the poetry of Cervantes, by leaving out many entire stanzas from the larger compositions, and suppressing some of the smaller altogether. Yet the translation of

those poems which he has retained, is possessed of much poetical merit, and, in particular, those verses which are of a graver cast, are, in my opinion, superior to those of his rival.

"On the whole, I am inclined to think, the version of Motteux is by far the best we have yet seen of the romance of Cervantes, and that, if corrected in its licentious observations and enlargements, and in some other particulars, which I have noticed in the course of this comparison, we should have nothing to desire superior to it in the way of translation."

After the publication of "Don Quixote," Smollett paid a visit to his native country, in order to see his mother, who then resided at Scotston, in Peeblesshire, with her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Telfer. Dr. Moore has given us the following beautiful anecdote respecting the meeting of the mother with her distinguished son.

"On Smollett's arrival, he was introduced to his mother, with the connivance of Mrs. Telfer, as a gentleman from the West Indies, who was intimately acquainted with her son. The better to support his assumed character, he endeavoured to preserve a serious countenance, approaching to a frown; but, while his mother's eyes were riveted on his countenance, he could not refrain from smiling: She immediately sprung from her chair, and, throwing her arms around his neck, exclaimed, 'Ah, my son! my son! I have found you at last!'

"She afterwards told him, that if he had kept his austere looks, and continued to 'gloom,' he might have escaped detection some time longer; 'but your old roguish smile,' added she, 'betrayed you at once.'"

Having revisited the seat of his family, then possessed by his cousin, and spent a day or two at Glasgow, the scene of his early studies and frolics, Smollett returned to England, in order to undertake the direction of the *Critical Review*, a work which was established under patronage of the Tories and High-Church party; and which was intended to maintain their principles in opposition to the *Monthly Review*, conducted according to the sentiments of Whigs and Low-Churchmen.

Smollett's taste and talents qualified him highly for periodical criticism, as well as the promptitude of his wit, and the ready application which he could make of a large store of miscellaneous learning and acquired knowledge. But, on the other hand, he was always a hasty, and often a prejudiced judge; and, while he himself applied the critical scourge without mercy, he could not endure that those who felt his blows should either wince or complain under his chastisement. To murmur against his decrees, was the sure way to incur further marks of his resentment, and thus his criticism deviated still more widely from dispassionate discussion, as the passions of the reviewer and of the author became excited into a clamorous contest of mutual rejoinder, recrimination, and abuse. Many petty squabbles, which occurred to teaze and embitter the life of Smollett, and to diminish the respectability with which his talents must otherwise have invested him, had their origin in his situation as Editor of the

Critical Review. He was engaged in one controversy with the notorious Shebbeare, in another with Dr. Grainger, the elegant author of the beautiful Ode to Solitude, and in several wrangles and brawls with persons of less celebrity.

But the most unlucky controversy in which his critical office involved our author, was that with Admiral Knowles, who had published a pamphlet vindicating his own conduct in the secret expedition against Rochfort, which disgracefully miscarried, in 1757. This defence was examined in the *Critical Review*; and Smollett, himself the author of the article, used the following intemperate expressions concerning Admiral Knowles. "He is an admiral without conduct, an engineer without knowledge, an officer without resolution, and a man without veracity." The admiral commenced a prosecution against the printer of the *Review*, declaring at the same time that he desired only to discover the author of the paragraph, and, should he prove a gentleman, to demand satisfaction of a different nature. This decoy, for such it proved, was the most effectual mode which could have been devised to draw the high-spirited Smollett within the danger of the law. When the court were about to pronounce judgment in the case, Smollett appeared, and took the consequences upon himself, and Admiral Knowles redeemed the pledge he had given, by enforcing judgment for a fine of one hundred pounds, and obtaining a sentence against the defendant of three months' imprisonment. How the Admiral reconciled his conduct to the rules usually observed by gentlemen, we are not informed; but the proceeding seems to justify even Smollett's strength of expression, when he terms him an officer without resolution, and a man without veracity. This imprisonment took place in 1759, and was, as we have stated already, the most memorable result of the various quarrels in which his duty as a critic engaged Dr. Smollett. We resume the account of his literary labours, which our detail of these disputes has something interrupted.

About 1757, Smollett compiled and published, without his name, a useful and entertaining collection, entitled, "A Compendium of Authentic and Entertaining Voyages, digested in a chronological series; the whole exhibiting a clear view of the Customs, Manners, Religion, Government, Commerce, and Natural History of most Nations of the Known World; illustrated with a variety of Genuine Charts, Maps, Plans, Heads, &c.," in 7 vols. 12mo. This collection introduced to the British public several voyages which were otherwise little known, and contained, amongst other articles not before published, Smollett's own account of the "Expedition to Carthagena," of which he had given a short sketch in the "Adventures of Roderick Random."

In the same year, 1757, the farce or comedy of "The Reprisals; or, the Tars of Old England, was written and acted, to animate the people against the French, with whom we were then at war. In pursuance of this plan, every species of national prejudice is called up and appealed to, and the Frenchman is represented as the living re-

presentative and original of all the caricature prints and ballads against the eaters of *soupe maigre*, and wearers of wooden shoes. The sailors are drawn to the life, as the sailors of Smollett always are. The Scotchman and Irishman are hit off with the touch of a caricaturist of skill and spirit. But the story of the piece is as trivial as possible, and, on the whole, it forms no marked exception to the observation, that successful novelists have been rarely distinguished by excellence in dramatic composition.

Garrick's generous conduct to Smollett upon this occasion, fully obliterated all recollection of old differences. The manager allowed the author his benefit on the sixth, instead of the ninth night of the piece, abated certain charges or advances usually made on such occasions, and himself performed Lusignan on the same evening, in order to fill the theatre. Still, it seems, reports were in circulation that Smollett had spoken unkindly of Garrick, which called forth the following contradiction, in a letter which our author addressed to that celebrated performer.

"In justice to myself, I take the liberty to assure you, that if any person accuses me of having spoken disrespectfully of Mr. Garrick, of having hinted that he solicited for my farce, or had interested views in bringing it upon the stage, he does me wrong, upon the word of a gentleman. The imputation is altogether false and malicious. Exclusive of other considerations, I could not be such an idiot to talk in that strain when my own interest so immediately required a different sort of conduct. Perhaps the same insidious methods have been taken to inflame former animosities, which on my part are forgotten and self-condemned. I must own you have acted in this affair of the farce with that candour, openness, and cordiality, which even mortify my pride, while they lay me under the most sensible obligation: and I shall not rest satisfied until I have an opportunity to convince Mr. Garrick that my gratitude is at least as warm as any other of my passions. Meanwhile, I profess myself,

"Sir,
"Your most humble servant,
"T. SMOLLETT."

In the beginning of the year 1758, Smollett published his "Complete History of England, deduced from the Descent of Julius Cæsar to the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748;" in four volumes 4to. It is said that this voluminous work, containing the history of thirteen centuries, and written with uncommon spirit and correctness of language was composed and finished for the press within fourteen months, one of the greatest exertions of facility of composition which was ever recorded in the history of literature. Within a space so brief it could not be expected that new facts should be produced; and all the novelty which Smollett's history could present must needs consist in the mode of stating facts, or in the reflections deduced from them. In this work, the author fully announced his political principles, which, notwithstanding his Whig education, were those of a modern Tory, and a

favourer of the monarchical part of our constitution. For such a strain of sentiment, some readers will think no apology necessary; and by others none which we might propose would be listened to. Smollett has made his own defence, in a letter to Dr. Moore, dated 2nd January, 1758.

"I deferred answering your kind letter, until I should have finished my history, which is now completed. I was agreeably surprised to hear that my work had met with any approbation at Glasgow, for it was not at all calculated for that meridian. The last volume will, I doubt not, be severely censured by the west-country Whigs of Scotland.

"I desire you will divest yourself of prejudice, at least as much as you can, before you begin to peruse it, and consider well the facts before you pass judgment. Whatever may be its defect, I protest before God I have, as far as in me lay, adhered to truth, without espousing any faction, though I own I sat down to write with a warm side to those principles in which I was educated; but in the course of my inquiries, some of the Whig ministers turned out such a set of sordid knaves, that I could not help stigmatizing them for their want of integrity and sentiment."

In another letter to Dr. Moore, dated Chelsea, September 28, he expresses himself as follows:—

"I speak not of the few who think like philosophers, abstracted from the notions of the vulgar. The little petulant familiarities of our friend I can forgive, in consideration of the good will he has always manifested towards me and my concerns. He is mistaken, however, in supposing that I have imbibed priestly notions; I consider the Church not as a religious, but a political establishment, so minutely interwoven in our constitution, that the one cannot be detached from the other, without the most imminent danger of destruction to both. The use which our friend makes of the *Critical Review* is whimsical enough;* but I shall be glad if he uses it at any rate. I have not had leisure to do much in that work for some time past, therefore I hope you will not ascribe the articles indiscriminately to me; for I am equally averse to the praise and censure that belong to other men. Indeed, I am sick of both, and wish to God my circumstances would allow me to consign my pen to oblivion. I really believe that mankind grow every day more malicious.

"You will not be sorry to hear, that the weekly sale of the History has increased to above ten thousand. A French gentleman of talents and erudition has undertaken to translate it into that language, and I have promised to supply him with corrections."

As a powerful political party were insulted, and, as they alleged,

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* Dr. Moore's friend was so much enraged at criticisms in that Review, that he continued to take it for no other purpose than that he might read all the publications censured by it, and none of those which it praised.

misrepresented in Smollett's history, they readily lent their influence and countenance to the proprietors of Rapin's History, who, alarmed at the extensive sale of Smollett's rival work, deluged the public with criticisms and invectives against the author and his book. In process of time the controversy slept, and the main fault of the history was found to be, that the haste with which the author had accomplished his task, had necessarily occasioned his sitting down contented with superficial, and sometimes inaccurate, information.

In the course of 1760 and 1761, "The Adventures of Sir Lancelot Greaves" appeared, in detached portions, in various numbers of the *British Magazine, or Monthly Repository*, being written for the purpose of giving some spirit and popularity to that miscellany. Smollett appears to have executed his task with very little premeditation. During a part of the time he was residing at Paxton, in Berwickshire, on a visit to the late George Home, Esq., and when post-time drew near, he used to retire for half an hour or an hour, to prepare the necessary quantity of *copy*, as it is technically called in the printing-house, which he never gave himself the trouble to correct, or even to read over. "Sir Lancelot Greaves" was published separately, in 1762.

The idea of this work was probably suggested to our author during his labours upon "Don Quixote," and the plan forms a sort of corollary to that celebrated romance. The leading imperfection is the utter extravagance of the story, as applicable to England, and to the period when it is supposed to have happened. In Spain, ere the ideas of chivalry were extinct amongst that nation of romantic Hidalgos, the turn of Don Quixote's frenzy seems not altogether extravagant, and the armour which he assumed was still the ordinary garb of battle. But in England, and in modern times, that a young, amiable, and otherwise sensible man, acquainted also with the romance of "Cervantes," should have adopted a similar whim, gives good foundation for the obvious remark of Ferret: "What! you set up for a modern Don Quixote! The scheme is too stale and extravagant: what was humorous and well-timed satire in Spain near two hundred years ago, will make but a sorry jest, when really acted from affectation, at this time of day in England." To this Sir Lancelot replies, by a tirade which does not remove the objection so shrewdly stated by the misanthrope, affirming that he only warred against the foes of virtue and decorum; or, in his own words, "had assumed the armour of his forefathers, to remedy evils which the law cannot reach, to detect fraud and treason, abase insolence, mortify pride, discourage slander, disgrace immodesty, and stigmatize ingratitude." The degree of sanity which the amiable enthusiast possesses ought to have shown him, that the generous career he had undertaken would be much better accomplished without his armour, than with that superfluous and ridiculous appendage: and that for all the purposes of reformation to be effected in England, his pocket-book, filled with bank-notes, would be a better auxiliary than either sword or lance. In short, it becomes clear to the reader, that Sir Lancelot wears panoply only that his youthful elegance

and address, his bright armour and generous courser, may make him the more exact counterpart to the Knight of La Mancha.

If it be unnatural that Sir Lancelot should become a knight-errant, the whim of Crowe, the captain of a merchant vessel, adopting, at second-hand, the same folly, is, on the same grounds, still more exceptionable. There is nothing in the honest seaman's life or profession which renders it at all possible that he should have caught contagion from the insanity of Sir Lancelot. But, granting the author's premises,—and surely we often make large concessions with less advantage in prospect,—the quantity of comic humour which Smollett has extracted out of Crowe and Crabshaw, has as much hearty mirth in it as can be found even in his more finished compositions. The inferior characters are all sketched with the same bold, free, and peculiar touch that distinguishes this powerful writer; and, besides these we have named, Ferret, and Clarke, the kind-hearted attorney's clerk, with several subordinate personages, have all the vivacity of Smollett's strong pencil. Aurelia Darnel is by far the most feminine, and, at the same time, lady-like person, to whom the author has introduced us. There is also some novelty of situation and incident, and Smollett's recent imprisonment in the King's Bench, for the attack on Admiral Knowles, enabled him to enrich his romance with a portrait of the unfortunate Theodore, King of Corsica, and other companions in his captivity, whose misfortunes or frolics had conducted them to that place of imprisonment.

Smollett's next labour was to lend his aid in finishing that useful compendium, "The Modern Universal History," to which he contributed the Histories of France, Italy, and Germany. In the year 1761, he published, in detached numbers, his "Continuation of the History of England," which he carried on until he brought the narrative down to 1765. The sale of this work was very extensive; and although Smollett acquired by both histories about 2000*l*., which, in those days, was a large sum, yet the bookseller is said to have made 1000*l*. clear profit on the very day he made his bargain, by transferring it to a brother of the trade. This Continuation, appended as it usually is to the History of England, by Hume, forms a classical and standard work. It is not our present province to examine the particular merits of Smollett as a Historian: but it cannot be denied that, as a clear and distinct narrative of facts, strongly and vigorously told, with a laudable regard to truth and impartiality, the Continuation may vie with our best historical works. The author was incapable of being swayed by fear or favour; and where his judgment is influenced, we can see that he was only misled by an honest belief in the truth of his own arguments. At the same time, the Continuation, like Smollett's original History, has the defects incident to hurried composition, and likewise those which naturally attach themselves to contemporary narrative. Smollett had no access to those hidden causes of events which time brings forth in the slow progress of ages; and his work is chiefly compiled from those documents of a public and general descrip

tion, which often contain rather the colourable pretexts which statesmen are pleased to assign for their actions, than the real motives themselves. The English history, it is true, suffers less than those of other countries from this restriction of materials; for there are so many eyes upon our public proceedings, and they undergo such sifting discussion, both in and out of Parliament, that the actual motives of those in whose hands government is vested for the time, become speedily suspected, even if they are not actually avowed or unveiled. Upon the whole, with all its faults and deficiencies, it may be long ere we have a better History of Britain, during this latter period, than is to be found in the pages of Smollett.

Upon the accession of George III., and the commencement of Lord Bute's administration, Smollett's pen was employed in the defence of the young monarch's government, in a weekly paper called *The Briton*, which was soon silenced, and driven out of the field by the celebrated *North Briton*, conducted by John Wilkes. Smollett had been on terms of kindness with this distinguished demagogue, and had twice applied to his friendship,—once for the kind purpose of obtaining the dismission of Dr. Johnson's black servant, Francis Barber, from the navy, into which he had inconsiderately entered; and again, to mediate betwixt himself and Admiral Knowles, in the matter of the prosecution. Closer ties than these are readily dissolved before the fire of politics. The friends became political opponents; and Smollett, who had to plead an unpopular cause to unwilling auditors, and who, as a Scotchman, shared deeply and personally in that unpopularity, was compelled to give up *The Briton*, more, it would seem, from lack of spirit in his patron, Lord Bute, to sustain the contest any longer, than from any deficiency of zeal on his own part. So, at least, we may interpret the following passage, in a letter which he wrote from Italy to Caleb Whiteford, in 1770:—"I hope you will not discontinue your endeavours to represent faction and false patriotism in their true colours, though I believe the ministry little deserves that any man of genius should draw his pen in their defence. They seem to inherit the absurd stoicism of Lord Bute, who set himself up as a pillory, to be pelted by all the blackguards of England, upon the supposition that they would grow tired and leave off. I don't find that your ministers take any pains even to vindicate their moral characters from the foulest imputations; I would never desire a stronger proof of a bad heart, than a total disregard of reputation. A late nobleman, who had been a member of several administrations, owned to me, that one good writer was of more importance to the government than twenty placemen in the House of Commons."

In 1763, Smollett lent his assistance, or at least his name, to a translation of Voltaire's works, and also to a compilation entitled, "The Present State of all Nations, containing a Geographical, Natural, Commercial, and Political History of all the Countries of the known World."

About this time, Elizabeth, an amiable and accomplished young

person, the only offspring of Smollett's marriage, and to whom her father was devotedly attached, died in the fifteenth year of her life, leaving her parents overwhelmed with the deepest sorrow.

Ill health aided the effects of grief, and it was under these circumstances that Smollett undertook a journey to France and Italy, in which countries he resided from 1763 to 1766. Soon after his return in 1766, he published his "Travels through France and Italy, containing Observations on Character, Customs, Religion, Government, Police, Commerce, Arts, and Antiquities, with a particular Description of the Town, Territory, and Climate of Nice; to which is added, a Register of the Weather, kept during a Residence of Eighteen Months in that City;" in 2 vols. 8vo, in the form of letters to his friends in England, from different parts of those countries.

Smollett's Travels are distinguished by acuteness of remark, and shrewdness of expression,—by strong sense and pointed humour; but the melancholy state of the author's mind induced him to view all the ordinary objects from which travellers receive pleasure, with cynical contempt. Although so lately a sufferer by the most injurious national prejudices, he failed not to harbour and cherish all those which he himself had formerly adopted against the foreign countries through which he travelled. Nature had either denied Smollett the taste necessary to understand and feel the beauties of art, or else his embittered state of mind had, for the time, entirely deprived him of the power of enjoying them. The harsh censures which he passes on the Venus de Medicis, and upon the Pantheon; and the sarcasm with which his criticisms are answered by Sterne, are both well known. Yet, be it said without offence to the memory of that witty and elegant writer, it is more easy to assume, in composition, an air of alternate gaiety and sensibility, than to practise the virtues of generosity and benevolence, which Smollett exercised during his whole life, though often, like his own Matthew Bramble, under the disguise of peevishness and irritability. Sterne's writings show much flourish concerning virtues of which his life is understood to have produced little fruit; the temper of Smollet was

> Like a lusty winter.
> Frosty, but kindly.

On his return to Britain, in 1766, he visited Scotland for the last time, and had the pleasure of receiving a parent's last embrace. His health was now totally ruined. Constant rheumatism, and the pain arising from a neglected ulcer, which had got into a bad state, rendered him a victim to excruciating agonies. He afterwards recovered in a great degree, by applying mercurial ointment, and using the solution of corrosive sublimate. He gives a full account of the process of the cure in a letter to Dr. Moore, which concludes thus: "Had I been as well in summer, I should have exquisitely enjoyed my expedition to Scotland, which was productive of nothing to me but misery and disgust. Between friends, I am now convinced that my brain was in

some measure affected; for I had a kind of *coma vigil* upon me from April to November without intermission. In consideration of these circumstances, I know you will forgive all my peevishness and discontent; and tell good Mrs. Moore, to whom I present my cordial respects, that, with regard to me, she has as yet seen nothing but the wrong side of the tapestry."

Finding himself at liberty to resume his literary labours, Smollett published, in 1769, the political satire, called "The Adventures of an Atom," in which are satirized the several leaders of political parties, from 1754 till the dissolution of Lord Chatham's administration. His inefficient patron, Lord Bute, is not spared in this work; and Chatham is severely treated under the name of Jowler. The inconsistency of this great minister, in encouraging the German war, seems to have altered Smollett's opinion of his patriotism; and he does his acknowledged talents far less than justice, endeavouring by every means to undervalue the successes of his brilliant administration, or to impute them to causes independent of his measures. The chief purpose of the work (besides that of giving the author the opportunity to raise his hand, like that of Ishmael, against every man), is to inspire a national horror of continental connexions.

Shortly after the publication of "The Adventures of an Atom," disease again assailed Smollett with redoubled violence. Attempts being vainly made to obtain for him the office of Consul, in some port of the Mediterranean, he was compelled to seek a warmer climate, without better means of provision than his own precarious finances could afford. The kindness of his distinguished friend and countryman, Dr. Armstrong (then abroad), procured for Dr. and Mrs. Smollett a house at Monte Novo, a village situated on the side of a mountain overlooking the sea, in the neighbourhood of Leghorn; a romantic and salutary abode, where he prepared for the press the last, and, like music "sweetest in the close," the most pleasing of his compositions, "The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker." This delightful work was published in 1771, in three volumes, 12mo, and very favourably received by the public.

The very ingenious scheme of describing the various effects produced upon different members of the same family by the same objects, was not original, though it has been supposed to be so. Anstey, the facetious author of the "New Bath Guide," had employed it six or seven years before "Humphrey Clinker" appeared. But Anstey's diverting satire was but a light sketch compared to the finished and elaborate manner in which Smollett has, in the first place, identified his characters, and then fitted them with language, sentiments, and powers of observation, in exact correspondence with their talents, temper, condition, and disposition. The portrait of Matthew Bramble, in which Smollett described his own peculiarities, using towards himself the same rigid anatomy which he exercised upon others, is unequalled in the line of fictitious composition. It is peculiarly striking to observe, how often, in admiring the shrewd and sound sense, active benevo-

ence, and honourable sentiments combined in Matthew, we lose sight of the humorous peculiarities of his character, and with what effect they are suddenly recalled to our remembrance, just at the time and in the manner when we least expect them. All shrewish old maids, and simple waitingwomen, which shall hereafter be drawn, must be contented with the praise of approaching in merit to Mrs. Tabitha Bramble and Winifred Jenkins. The peculiarities of the hotheaded young Cantab, and the girlish romance of his sister, are admirably contrasted with the sense and pettish half-playful misanthropy of their uncle; and Humphrey Clinker (who by the way resembles Strap, supposing that excellent person to have a turn towards methodism) is, as far as he goes, equally delightful. Captain Lismahago was probably no violent caricature, allowing for the manners of the time. We can remember a good and gallant officer who was said to have been his prototype, but believe the opinion was only entertained from the striking resemblance which he bore in externals to the doughty captain.

When "Humphrey Clinker" appeared in London, the popular odium against the Scotch nation, which Wilkes and Churchill had excited, was not yet appeased, and Smollett had enemies amongst the periodical critics, who failed not to charge him with undue partiality to his own country. They observed, maliciously, but not untruly, that the cynicism of Matthew Bramble becomes gradually softened as he journeys northward, and that he who equally detested Bath and London, becomes wonderfully reconciled to walled cities and the hum of men, when he finds himself an inhabitant of the northern metropolis. It is not worth defending so excellent a work against so weak an objection. The author was a dying man, and his thoughts were turned towards the scenes of youthful gaiety and the abode of early friends, with a fond partiality, which had they been even less deserving of his attachment, would have been not only pardonable, but praiseworthy.

Moritur, et moriens dulces reminiscitur Argos.

Smollett failed not, as he usually did, to introduce himself, with the various causes which he had to complain of the world, into the pages of this delightful romance. He appears as Mr. Serle, and more boldly under his own name, and in describing his own mode of living, he satirizes without mercy the book-makers of the day, who had experienced his kindness without repaying him by gratitude. It does not, however, seem perfectly fair to make them atone for their ungracious return to his hospitality, by serving up their characters as a banquet to the public; and, in fact, it too much resembles the design of which Pallet accuses the Physician, of converting his guests into patients, in order to make him amends for the expense of the entertainment.

But criticism, whether candid or unjust, was soon to be of little use to the author. After the publication of his last work, he lingered through the summer, and at length, after enduring the vicissitudes of a wasting and painful disorder with unabated composure, the world

lost Tobias Smollett, on the 21st October, 1771, at the untimely age of only fifty-one years. There is little doubt, that grief for the loss of his daughter, a feeling of ungrateful neglect from those who were called upon to lend him assistance, a present sense of confined circumstances, which he was daily losing the power of enlarging by his own exertions, together with gloomy apprehensions for the future, materially aided the progress of the mortal disorder by which he was removed.

More happy in this respect than Fielding, Smollett's grave at Leghorn is distinguished by a plain monument, erected by his widow, to which Dr. Armstrong, his constant and faithful friend, supplied the following spirited inscription :—

Hic ossa conduntur
TOBIÆ SMOLLETT, Scoti;
Qui, prosapia generosa et antiqua natus,
Priscæ virtutis exemplar emicuit;
Aspectu ingenuo,
Corpore valido,
Pectore animoso,
Indole apprime benigna,
Et fere supra facultates munifica,
Insignis.
Ingenio feraci, faceto, versatili,
Omnigenæ fere doctrinæ mire capaci,
Varia fabularum dulcedine,
Vitam moresque hominum,
Ubertate summa ludens, depinxit.
Adverso, interim, nefas! tali tantoque alumno
Nisi quo satyræ opipare supplebat,
Seculo impio, ignavo, fatuo,
Quo musæ vix nisi nothæ
Mecænatulis Britannicis
Fovebantur.
In memoriam
Optimi et amabilis omnino viri,
Permultis amicis desiderati,
Hocce marmor
Dilectissima simul et amantissima conjux
L. M.
Sacravit.

In the year 1774, a column was erected to Smollett's memory near the house in which he was born, by his cousin, James Smollett, Esq., of Bonhill, with the following nervous and classical inscription, written by Professor George Stewart of Edinburgh, and partly by the late John Ramsay, Esq., of Ochtertyre, and corrected by Dr. Johnson The lines printed in Italics are by the latter :—

[Siste, viator!
Si leporis ingeniique venam benignam,
Si morum callidissimum pictorem,
Unquam es miratus,]
Immorare paululum memoriæ

TOBIÆ SMOLLETT, M.D.
Viri virtutibus hisce
Quas in homine et cive
Et laudes et imiteris,
Haud mediocriter ornati:
Qui in literis variis versatus,
Postquam, felicitate sibi propria,
Sese posteris commendaverat,
Morte acerba raptus
Anno ætatis 51.
Eheu! quam procul a patria!
Prope Liburni portum in Italia,
Jacet sepultus.
Tali tantoque viro, patruelo suo,
Cui in decursu lampada
Se potius tradidisse decuit,
Hanc Columnam,
Amoris, eheu! inane monumentum
In ipsis Levinæ ripis,
Quas versiculis sub exitu vitæ illustratas,
Primis infans vagitibus personuit,
Ponendam curavit
JACOBUS SMOLLETT de Bonhill.
Abi et reminiscere,
Hoc quidem honore,
Non modo defuncti memoriæ,
Verum etiam exemplo, prospectum esse;
Aliis enim, si modo digni sint,
Idem erit virtutis præmium!

The widow of Smollett long continued an inhabitant of the neighbourhood of Leghorn, supporting herself in obscurity and with difficulty, upon the small remnant of fortune he had been able to bequeath to her. We remember a benefit play being performed on her account, at Edinburgh, in which Houston Stewart Nicholson, Esq., an amateur performer, appeared in the part of Pierre. The profits are said to have amounted to 300*l*. An epilogue, written for the occasion, by Mr. Graham of Gartmore, was spoken by the late Mr. Woods, of the Theatre-Royal, Edinburgh.

Smollett's "Ode to Independence," the most characteristic of his poetical works, was published, two years after his death, by the Messrs. Foulis of Glasgow. The mythological commencement is eminently beautiful.

His name was appended to a version of Telemachus, as, during his life, it had appeared to a translation of "Gil Blas," to which it is supposed he contributed little or nothing more. In 1785, a farce, called "The Israelites, or the Pampered Nabob," was acted on the Covent Garden stage, for the benefit of Mr. Aiken. It was ascribed to Smollett on very dubious evidence, was indifferently received, and has never since appeared, either on the stage or in print.

The person of Smollett was eminently handsome, his features prepossessing, and, by the joint testimony of all his surviving friends, his conversation in the highest degree instructive and amusing. Of his disposition, those who have read his works (and who has not done so?) may form a very accurate estimate; for in each of them he has presented, and sometimes under various points of view, the leading features of his own character, without disguising the most unfavourable of them. Nay, there is room to believe, that he rather exaggerated than softened that cynical turn of temper, which was the principal fault of his disposition, and which engaged him in so many quarrels. It is remarkable, that all his heroes, from Roderick Random downward, possess a haughty, fierce irritability of disposition, until the same features appear softened, and rendered venerable by age and philosophy, in Matthew Bramble. The sports in which they most delight are those which are attended with disgrace, mental pain, and bodily mischief to others; and their humanity is never represented as interrupting the course of their frolics. We know not that Smollett had any other marked failing, save that which he himself has so often and so liberally acknowledged. When unseduced by his satirical propensities, he was kind, generous, and humane to others; bold, upright, and independent in his own character; stooped to no patron, sued for no favour, but honestly and honourably maintained himself on his literary labours; when, if he was occasionally employed in work which was beneath his talents, the disgrace must remain with those who saved not such a genius from the degrading drudgery of compiling and translating. He was a doating father and an affectionate husband; and the warm zeal with which his memory was cherished by his surviving friends, showed clearly the reliance which they placed upon his regard. Even his resentments, though often hastily adopted, and incautiously expressed, were neither ungenerous nor enduring. He was open to conviction, and ready to make both acknowledgment and allowance when he had done injustice to others, willing also to forgive and to be reconciled when he had received it at their hand.

Churchill,* and other satirists, falsely ascribe to Smollett the mean

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* The article upon "The Rosciad" in the *Critical Review*, (that fertile mother of all the dissensions in which Smollett was engaged,) was so severe as to call forth the bard's bitter resentment, in the 2nd edition; where, ascribing the offensive article to Smollett, in which he was mistaken, he thus apostrophizes him:

> Whence could arise this mighty critic spleen,
> The Muse a trifler, and her theme so mean?
> What had I done, that angry heav'n should send
> The bitterest foe where most I wish'd a friend?
> Oft hath my tongue been wanton at thy name,
> And hail'd the honours of thy matchless fame
> For me let hoary *Fielding* bite the ground,
> So nobler *Pickle* stand superbly bound;

passion of literary envy, to which his nature was totally a stranger. The manner in which he mentions Fielding and Richardson in the account of the literature of the century, shows how much he understood, and how liberally he praised, the merit of those, who, in the view of the world, must have been regarded as his immediate rivals. "The genius of Cervantes," in his generous expression, "was transfused into the novels of Fielding, who painted the characters, and ridiculed the follies of life, with equal strength, humour, and propriety;"—a passage which we record with pleasure, as a proof that the disagreement which existed betwixt Smollett and Fielding did not prevent his estimating with justice, and recording in suitable terms the merits of the Father of the English Novel. His historian, with equal candour, proceeds to tell his reader, that "the laudable aim of enlisting the passions on the side of virtue was successfully pursued by Richardson in his 'Pamela,' 'Clarissa,' and 'Grandison,' a species of writing equally new and extraordinary, where, mingled with much superfluity and impertinence, we find a sublime system of ethics, an amazing knowledge and command of human nature."

In leaving Smollett's personal for his literary character, it is impossible not to consider the latter as contrasted with that of his eminent contemporary, Fielding. It is true, that such comparisons, though recommended by the example of Plutarch, are not in general the best mode of estimating individual merit. But in the present case, the contemporary existence, the private history, accomplishments, talents, pursuits, and, unfortunately, the fates of these two great authors, are so closely allied, that it is scarce possible to name the one without exciting recollections of the other. Fielding and Smollett were both born in the highest rank of society, both educated to learned professions, yet both obliged to follow miscellaneous literature as a means of subsistence. Both were confined, during their lives, by the narrowness of their circumstances,—both united a humorous cynicism with generosity and good-nature,—both died of the diseases incident to a sedentary life, and to literary labour,—and both drew their last breath in a foreign land, to which they retreated under the adverse circumstances of a decayed constitution, and an exhausted fortune.

Their studies were no less similar than their lives. They both wrote for the stage, and neither of them successfully. They both meddled in politics, and never obtained effectual patronage; they both wrote travels, in which they showed that their good humour was wasted under the sufferings of their disease; and, to conclude, they were both so eminently successful as novelists, that no other English author of

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From *Livy's* temples tear the historic crown,
Which, with more justice blooms upon thine own," &c.

A poet of inferior note, author of a poem called *The Race*, has brought the same charge against Smollett, in still coarser terms.

that class has a right to be mentioned in the same breath with Fielding and Smollett.

If we compare the works of these two great masters yet more closely, we may assign to Fielding, with little hesitation, the praise of a higher and a purer taste than was shown by his rival; more elegance of composition and expression; a nearer approach to the grave irony of Swift and Cervantes; a great deal more address or felicity in the conduct of his story; and, finally, a power of describing amiable and virtuous characters, and of placing before us heroes, and especially heroines, of a much higher as well as more pleasing character than Smollett was able to present.

Thus the art and felicity with which the story of "Tom Jones" evolves itself, is nowhere found in Smollett's novels, where the heroes pass from one situation in life, and from one stage of society, to another totally unconnected, except that, as in ordinary life, the adventures recorded, though not bearing upon each other, or on the catastrophe, befall the same personage. Characters are introduced and dropped without scruple, and, at the end of the work, the hero is found surrounded by a very different set of associates from those with whom his fortune seemed at first indissolubly connected. Neither are the characters which Smollett designed should be interesting, half so amiable as his readers could desire. The low-minded Roderick Random, who borrows Strap's money, wears his clothes, and, rescued from starving by the attachment of that simple and kind-hearted adherent, rewards him by squandering his substance, receiving his attendance as a servant, and beating him when the dice ran against him, is not to be named in one day with the open-hearted, good-humoured, and noble-minded Tom Jones, whose libertinism (one particular omitted) is perhaps rendered but too amiable by his good qualities. We believe there are few readers who are not disgusted with the miserable reward assigned to Strap in the closing chapter of the novel. Five hundred pounds (scarce the value of the goods he had presented to his master), and the hand of a reclaimed street-walker, even when added to a Highland farm, seem but a poor recompense for his faithful and disinterested attachment. The Englishman is a hundred times more grateful to Partridge (whose morality is very questionable, and who follows Jones's fortunes with the self-seeking fidelity of a cur, who, while he loves his master, has his eye upon the flesh-pots), than Roderick Random shows himself towards the disinterested and generous attachment of poor Strap. There may be one way of explaining this difference of taste betwixt these great authors, by recollecting, that in Scotland, at that period, the absolute devotion of a follower to his master was something which entered into, and made part of the character of the lower ranks in general; and therefore domestic fidelity was regarded as a thing more of course than in England, and received less gratitude than it deserved, in consideration of its more frequent occurrence.

But to recur to our parallel betwixt the characters of Fielding and

those of Smollett, we should do Jones great injustice by weighing him in the balance with the wild and ferocious Pickle, who,—besides his gross and base brutality towards Emilia, besides his ingratitude to his uncle, and the savage propensity which he shows, in the pleasure he takes to torment others by practical jokes resembling those of a fiend in glee,—exhibits a low and ungentleman-like tone of thinking, only one degree higher than that of Roderick Random. The blackguard frolic of introducing a prostitute, in a false character, to his sister, is a sufficient instance of that want of taste and feeling which Smollett's admirers are compelled to acknowledge, may be detected in his writings. It is yet more impossible to compare Sophia or Amelia to the females of Smollett, who (excepting Aurelia Darnel) are drawn as the objects rather of appetite than of affection, and excite no higher or more noble interest than might be created by the houris of the Mahomedan paradise.

It follows from this superiority on the side of Fielding, that his novels exhibit, more frequently than those of Smollett, scenes of distress, which excite the sympathy and pity of the reader. No one can refuse his compassion to Jones, when, by a train of practices upon his generous and open character, he is expelled from his benefactor's house under the foulest and most heart-rending accusations; but we certainly sympathize very little in the distress of Pickle, brought on by his own profligate profusion, and enhanced by his insolent misanthropy. We are only surprised that his predominating arrogance does not weary out the benevolence of Hatchway and Pipes, and scarce think the ruined spendthrift deserves their persevering and faithful attachment.

But the deep and fertile genius of Smollett afforded resources sufficient to make up for these deficiencies; and when the full weight has been allowed to Fielding's superiority of taste and expression, his northern contemporary will still be found fit to balance the scale with his great rival. If Fielding had superior taste, the palm of more brilliancy of genius, more inexhaustible richness of invention, must in justice be awarded to Smollett. In comparison with his sphere, that in which Fielding walked was limited and compared with the wealthy profusion of varied character and incident which Smollett has scattered through his works, there is a poverty of composition about his rival. Fielding's fame rests on a single *chef d'œuvre;* and the art and industry which produced "Tom Jones," was unable to rise to equal excellence in "Amelia." Though, therefore, we must prefer "Tom Jones" as the most masterly example of an artful and well-told novel, to any individual work of Smollett; yet "Roderick Random," "Peregrine Pickle," and "Humphrey Clinker," do each of them far excel "Joseph Andrews" or "Amelia;" and, to descend still lower, "Jonathan Wild," or "The Journey to the next World," cannot be put into momentary comparison with "Sir Lancelot Greaves," or "Ferdinand Count Fathom."

Every successful novelist must be more or less a poet, even although

he may never have written a line of verse. The quality of imagination is absolutely indispensable to him; his accurate power of examining and embodying human character and human passion, as well as the external face of nature, is not less essential; and the talent of describing well what he feels with acuteness, added to the above requisites, goes far to complete the poetic character. Smollett was, even in the ordinary sense, which limits the name to those who write verses, a poet of distinction; and, in this particular, superior to Fielding, who seldom aims at more than a slight translation from the classics.* Accordingly, if he is surpassed by Fielding in moving pity, the northern novelist soars far above him in his powers of exciting terror. Fielding has no passages which approach in sublimity to the robber-scene in "Count Fathom;" or to the terrible description of a sea-engagement, in which Roderick Random sits chained and exposed upon the poop, without the power of motion or exertion, during the carnage of a tremendous engagement. Upon many other occasions, Smollett's descriptions ascend to the sublime; and, in general, there is an air of romance in his writings, which raises his narratives above the level and easy course of ordinary life. He was, like a pre-eminent poet of our own day, a searcher of dark bosoms, and loved to paint characters under the strong agitation of fierce and stormy passions. Hence misanthropes, gamblers, and duellists, are as common in his works, as robbers in those of Salvator Rosa, and are drawn, in most cases, with the same terrible truth and effect. To compare "Ferdinand Count Fathom" to the "Jonathan Wild" of Fielding, would be perhaps unfair to the latter author; yet, the works being composed on the same plan (a very bad one, as we think), we cannot help placing them by the side of each other; when it becomes at once obvious that the detestable Fathom is a living and existing miscreant, at whom we shrink as if from the presence of an incarnate fiend, while the villain of Fielding seems rather a cold personification of the abstract principle of evil, so far from being terrible, that notwithstanding the knowledge of the world argued in many passages of his adventures, we are compelled to acknowledge him absolutely tiresome.

It is, however, chiefly in his profusion, which amounts almost to prodigality, that we recognise the superior richness of Smollett's fancy. He never shows the least desire to make the most either of a character, or a situation, or an adventure, but throws them together

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* A judge, competent in the highest degree, has thus characterized Smollett's poetical compositions: "They have a portion of delicacy, not to be found in his novels; but they have not, like those prose fictions, the strength of a master's hand. Were he to live again, we might wish him to write more poetry, in the belief that his poetical talent would improve by exercise; but we should be glad that we had more of his novels just as they are."—"Specimens of the British Poets," by Thomas Campbell, vol. vi. The truth is, that in these very novels are expended many of the ingredients both of grave and humorous poetry.

with a carelessness which argues unlimited confidence in his own powers. Fielding pauses to explain the principles of his art, and to congratulate himself and his readers on the felicity with which he constructs his narrative, or makes his characters evolve themselves in its progress. These appeals to the reader's judgment, admirable as they are, have sometimes the fault of being diffuse, and always the great disadvantage that they remind us we are perusing a work of fiction; and that the beings with whom we have been conversant during the perusal, are but a set of evanescent phantoms, conjured up by a magician for our amusement. Smollett seldom holds communication with his readers in his own person. He manages his delightful puppet-show without thrusting his head beyond the curtain, like Gines de Passamont, to explain what he is doing; and hence, besides that our attention to the story remains unbroken, we are sure that the author, fully confident in the abundance of his materials, has no occasion to eke them out with extrinsic matter.

Smollett's sea-characters have been deservedly considered as inimitable; and the power with which he has diversified them, in so many instances, distinguishing the individual features of each honest tar, while each possesses a full proportion of professional manners and habits of thinking, is a most absolute proof of the richness of fancy with which the author was gifted, and which we have noticed as his chief advantage over Fielding. Bowling, Trunnion, Hatchway, Pipes, and Crowe, are all men of the same class, habits, and tone of thinking, yet so completely differenced by their separate and individual characters, that we at once acknowledge them as distinct persons, while we see and allow that every one of them belongs to the old English navy. These striking portraits have now the merit which is cherished by antiquaries—they preserve the memory of the school of Benbow and Boscawen, whose manners are now banished from the quarter-deck to the forecastle. The naval officers of the present day, the splendour of whose actions has thrown into shadow the exploits of a thousand years, do not now affect the manners of foremast-men, and have shown how admirably well their duty can be discharged without any particular attachment to tobacco or flip, or the decided preference of a check shirt over a linen one. But these, when memory carries them back thirty or forty years, must remember many a weather-beaten veteran, whose appearance, language, and sentiments free Smollett from the charge of extravagance in his characteristic sketches of British seamen of the last century.

In the comic part of their writings, we have already said, Fielding is pre-eminent in grave irony, a Cervantic species of pleasantry, in which Smollett is not equally successful. On the other hand, the Scotchman, notwithstanding the general opinion denies that quality to his countrymen, excels in broad and ludicrous humour. His fancy seems to run riot in accumulating ridiculous circumstances one upon another, to the utter destruction of all power of gravity; and perhaps no books ever written have excited such peals of inextinguishable

laughter as those of Smollett. The descriptions which affect us thus powerfully, border sometimes upon what is called farce or caricature; but if it be the highest praise of pathetic composition that it draws forth tears, why should it not be esteemed the greatest excellence of the ludicrous that it compels laughter? the one tribute is at least as genuine an expression of natural feeling as the other; and he who can read the calamitous career of Trunnion and Hatchway, when run away with by their mettled steeds, or the inimitable absurdities of the Feast of the Ancients, without a good hearty burst of honest laughter, must be well qualified to look sad and gentleman-like with Lord Chesterfield and Master Stephen.

Upon the whole, the genius of Smollett may be said to resemble that of Rubens. His pictures are often deficient in grace; sometimes coarse, and even vulgar in conception; deficient in keeping, and in the due subordination of parts to each other; and intimating too much carelessness on the part of the artist. But these faults are redeemed by such richness and brilliancy of colours; such a profusion of imagination—now bodying forth the grand and terribly—now the natural, the easy, and the ludicrous; there is so much of life, action, and bustle, in every group he has painted; so much force and individuality of character,—that we readily grant to Smollett an equal rank with his great rival Fielding, while we place both far above any of their successors in the same line of fictitious composition

ABBOTSFORD, *1st June*, 1821.

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

THIS author, distinguished in the eighteenth century, survived till the present was considerably advanced, interesting to the public, as well as to private society, not only on account of his own claims to distinction, but as the last of that constellation of genius which the predominating spirit of Johnson had assembled about him, and in which he presided a stern Aristarchus. Cumberland's character and writings are associated with those of Goldsmith, of Burke, of Percy, of Reynolds, names which sound in our ears as those of English classics. He was his own biographer; and from his Memoirs we are enabled to trace a brief sketch of his life and labours, as also of his temper and character; on which latter subject we have the evidence of contemporaries, and perhaps some recollections of our own.

Richard Cumberland boasted himself, with honest pride, the descendant of parents respectable for their station, eminent in learning, and no less for worth and piety. The celebrated Richard Bentley was his maternal grandfather, a name dreaded as well as respected in literature, and which his descendant, on several occasions, protected with filial respect against those who continued over his grave the insults which he had received from the wits of Queen Anne's reign. This eminent scholar had one son, the well-known author of "The Wishes," and two daughters. The second, Joanna, the Phœbe of Byron's pastoral, married Dennis Cumberland, son of an archdeacon, and grandson of Richard Cumberland, Bishop of Peterborough.*

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* The following amiable picture of Richard Cumberland occurs in the very interesting Memoirs of Samuel Pepys:—

"18*th March*, 1667.—Comes my old friend Mr. Richard Cumberland to see me, being newly come to town, whom I have not seen almost, if not quite, these seven years. In a plain country parson's dress. I could not spend much time with him, but prayed him to come with his brother, who was with him, to dine with me to-day; which he did do: and I had a great deal of his good company; and a most excellent person he is as any I know, and one that I am sorry should be lost and buried in a little country-town, and would be glad to remove him thence; and the truth is, if he would accept of my sister's fortune, I should give 100*l.* more with him than to a man able to settle her four times as much as I fear he is able to do."

It is impossible to suppress a smile at the manner in which the candid journalist describes the brother-in-law whom he finally adopted, not without a glance of regret towards Cumberland;—

"*February 7th*, 1667-8.—Met my cosen Roger again, and Mr. Jackson, who is a plain young man, handsome enough for her, one of no education nor discourse, but of few words, and one altogether that, I think, will please me well enough. My cosen had got me to give the odd sixth 100*l.* presently, which I intended to keep

Though possessed of some independence, he became rector of Stanwick, at the instance of his father-in-law, Dr. Bentley, and, in course of time, Bishop of Clonfert, and was afterwards translated to the see of Kilmore.

Richard Cumberland, the subject of this memoir, was the second child of this marriage, the eldest being Joanna, a daughter. He was born on the 19th of February, 1732: and, as he naturally delights to record with precision, in an apartment called the Judge's Chamber, of the Master's Lodge of Trinity College, then occupied by his celebrated maternal grandfather—*inter sylvas Academi.* With equal minuteness the grandson of the learned Bentley goes through the course of his earlier studies, and registers his progress under Kinsman of St. Edmondsbury, afterwards at Westminster, and finally at Cambridge; in all which seminaries of classical erudition, he highly distinguished himself. At college he endangered his health by the severity with which he followed his studies, obtained his Bachelor's degree with honour, and passed with triumph a peculiarly difficult examination; the result of which was his being elected to a Fellowship.

Amid his classical pursuits, the cultivation of English letters was not neglected, and Cumberland became the author of many poems of considerable merit. It may be observed, however, that he seldom seems to have struck out an original path for himself, but rather wrote because others had written successfully, and in the manner of which they had set an example, than from the strong impulse of that inward fire, which makes or forces a way for its own coruscations, without respect to the course of others. Thus Cumberland wrote an Elegy in a Churchyard on St. Mark's Eve, because Gray had, with general applause, published an Elegy in a Country Churchyard. He composed a drama on the subject of Elfrida, and with a chorus, in imitation of Mason; he imitated Hammond, and he imitated Spenser, and seems to display a mind full of information and activity, abounding with the natural desire of distinction, but which had not yet attained sufficient confidence in its own resources, to attempt a road to eminence of his own discovery; and this is a defect from which none of his compositions are entirely free.

Mr. Cumberland's original destiny was to have walked the respectable and retired path by which his ancestors had ascended to church dignity; and there is every reason to believe, that, as he was their equal in worth and learning, his success in life might have been the same as theirs. But a temptation, difficult to be resisted, turned him from the study of divinity to that of politics.

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to the birth of the first child: and let it go—I shall be eased of the care. So there parted, my mind pretty well satisfied with this plain fellow for my sister; though I shall, I see, have no pleasure nor content in him, as if he had been a man of reading and parts, like Cumberland."—PEPYS' *Diary*, vol. ii. pp. 29 and 189.

The Rev. Mr. Cumberland, father of the poet, had it in his power to render some important political services to the Marquis of Halifax, then distinguished as a public character; and in recompense or acknowledgment of this, young Richard was withdrawn from the groves of Cam, and the tranquil pursuit of a learned profession, to attend the noble lord in the advantageous and confidential situation of private secretary. Amidst much circumlocution and moral reflection, which Cumberland bestows on this promotion and change of pursuit, the reader may fairly infer, that though he discharged with regularity the ostensible duties of his office, it was not suited to him: nor did he give the full satisfaction which perhaps he might have done, had a raw academician, his head full, as he says, of Greek and Latin, and little acquainted with the affairs of the existing world, been in the first place introduced for a time to busy life as a spectator, ere called to take an active part in it as a duty. His situation, however, led him into the best society, and insured liberal favour and patronage (so far as praise and recommendation went) to the efforts of his muse. In particular, his connexion with Lord Halifax introduced our author to Bubb Doddington, afterwards Lord Melcombe, of Diary memory, who affected the character of Mæcenas, and was in reality an accomplished man.

It was under the joint auspices of Lords Halifax and Melcombe, that Cumberland executed what he has entitled his first legitimate drama, "The Banishment of Cicero"—an unhappy subject, the deficiencies of which are not redeemed by much powerful writing. This tragedy was recommended to Garrick by the two noble patrons of Cumberland; but, in despite of his deference for great names and high authorities, the manager would not venture on so unpromising a subject of representation. "The Banishment of Cicero" was published by the author, who frankly admits, that in doing so he printed Garrick's vindication.

About this time, as an earnest of future favours, Cumberland obtained, through the influence of Lord Halifax, the office of crown-agent for the province of Nova Scotia, and conceived his fortune sufficiently advanced in the world, to settle himself by marriage. In 1759, therefore, he united himself to Elizabeth, only daughter of George Ridge, of Kilmerton, by Miss Brooke, a niece of Cumberland's grandfather, Bentley. Mrs. Cumberland was accomplished and beautiful, and the path of promotion appeared to brighten before the happy bridegroom.

Lord Bute's star was now rising fast in the political horizon, and both the Marquis of Halifax and the versatile Bubb Doddington had determined to worship the influence of this short-lived luminary. The latter obtained a British peerage, a barren honour, which only entitled him to walk in the procession at the coronation, and the former had the Lieutenancy of Ireland. The celebrated Single-Speech Hamilton held the post of Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant, while Cumberland, not to his perfect content, was obliged to confine

himself to the secondary department of Ulster Secretary. There was wisdom, perhaps, in the selection, though it would have been unreasonable to expect the disappointed private secretary to concur in that opinion. No one ever doubted the acute political and practical talents of William Gerard Hamilton, while Cumberland possessed, perhaps, too much of the poetical temperament to rival him as a man of business. A vivid imagination, eager on its own schemes, and unapt to be stirred by matter of duller import; a sanguine temper, to which hopes too often seem as certainties, joined to a certain portion both of self-opinion and self-will, although they are delightful, considered as the attributes of an intimate friend, are inconvenient ingredients in the character of a dependent, whose duty lies in the paths of ordinary business. Besides, Mr. D'Israeli has produced the following curious evidence, to show that Cumberland's habits were not those which fit a man for ordinary affairs: "A friend who was in office with the late Mr. Cumberland, assures me that he was so intractable to the forms of business, and so easily induced to do more or to do less than he ought, that he was compelled to perform the official business of this literary man, to free himself from his annoyance; and yet Cumberland could not be reproached with any deficiency in a knowledge of the human character, which he was always touching with a caustic pleasantry."*

Cumberland, however, rendered his principal some effectual service, even in the most worldly application of the phrase—he discovered a number of lapsed patents, the renewal of which the Lord-Lieutenant found a convenient fund of influence; but the Ulster Secretary had no other reward than the empty offer of a baronetcy, which he wisely declined. He was gratified, however, though less directly, by the promotion of his father to the see of Clonfert in Ireland. The new prelate shifted his residence to that kingdom, where, during his subsequent life, his son, with pious duty, spent some considerable part of every year in attendance on his declining age.

Lord Halifax, on his return to England, obtained the seals of Secretary of State, and Cumberland, a candidate for the office of Under Secretary, received the cold answer from his patron, that "he was not fit for every situation;" a reason scarce rendered more palatable by the special addition, that he did not possess the necessary fluency in the French tongue. Sedgwick, the successful competitor, vacated a situation at the Board of Trade, called Clerk of Reports, and Cumberland became desirous to hold it in his room. As this was in the gift of Lord Hillsborough, the proposal to apply for it was in a manner withdrawing from the patronage of Lord Halifax, who seems to have considered it as such, and there ensued some coldness betwixt the minister and his late private secretary. On looking at these events, we can see that Cumberland was probably no good man of

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* "The Literary Character Illustrated.

business, as it is called, certainly no good courtier; for, holding such a confidential situation with Lord Halifax, he must otherwise have rendered himself either too useful, or too agreeable, to be easily parted with.

An attempt of Cumberland's to fill up the poetical part of an English opera, incurred the jealousy of Bickerstaff, the author of "Love in a Village," then in possession of that department of dramatic composition. The piece, called the "Summer's Tale," succeeded in such a degree, as induced the rival writer to vent his indignation in every species of abuse against the author and the drama. In a much better spirit, Cumberland ascribed Bickerstaff's hostility to an anxious apprehension for his interest, and generously intimated his intention to interfere no further with him as a writer of operas. The dispute led to important consequences; for Smith, well known by the deserved appellation of Gentleman Smith, then of Covent-Garden, turned the author's dramatic genius into a better channel, by strongly recommending to him to attempt the legitimate drama. By this encouragement, Mr. Cumberland was induced to commence his dramatic career, which he often pursued with success, and almost always with such indefatigable industry, as has no parallel in our theatrical history.

"The Brothers" was the first fruit of this ample harvest. It was received with applause, and is still on the stock-list of acting plays. The sudden assumption of spirit by Sir Benjamin Dove, like Luke's change from servility to insolence, is one of those incidents which always tell well upon the spectator. The author acknowledges his obligations to Fletcher's "Little French Lawyer;" but the comedy is brought to bear on a point so different, that little is in this instance detracted from its merit.

But the "West Indian," which succeeded in the following year, raised its author much higher in the class of dramatic writers of the period, and—had Sheridan not been—must have placed Cumberland decidedly at the head of the list. It is a classical comedy; the dialogue spirited and elegant; the characters well conceived, and presenting bold features, though still within the line of probability; and the plot regularly conducted, and happily extricated. The character of Major O'Flaherty, those who have seen it represented by Jack Johnstone* will always consider as one of the most efficient in

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* Commonly called Irish Johnstone. The judgment displayed by this excellent actor, in his by-play, as it is called, was peculiarly exquisite. When he intercepted the cordial designed for Lady Rusport, and which her attendant asserted was only good for ladies' complaints, the quiet and sly expression of surprise, admirably subdued by good breeding, and by the respect of a man of gallantry even to the foibles of the fair sex, and the dry mode in which he pronounced that the potion was very "good for some gentlemen's complaints, too," intimated at once the quality of her ladyship's composing draught, but in a manner accurately consistent with the perfect politeness of the discoverer, enjoying the jest himself, yet anxious to avoid the most distant appearance of insulting or ridiculing the

the British drama. It could only have been drawn by one who, like Cumberland, had enjoyed repeated opportunities of forming a true estimate of the Irish gentleman; and the Austrian cockade in his hat, might serve to remind the British administration, that they had sacrificed the services of this noble and martial race to unjust restrictions and political prejudices. The character of Major O'Flaherty may have had the additional merit of suggesting that of Sir Lucius O'Trigger; but the latter is a companion, not a copy, of Cumberland's portrait.

Garrick, reconciled with the author by a happy touch of praise in the prologue to "The Brothers," contributed an epilogue, and Tom King supported the character of Belcour with that elastic energy which gave reality to all the freaks of a child of the sun, whose benevolence seems as instinctive as his passion.

The "Fashionable Lover," which followed the "West Indian," was an addition to Cumberland's reputation. There was the same elegance of dialogue, but much less of the *vis comica*. The scenes hang heavy on the stage, and the character of Colin M'Leod, the honest Scotch servant, not being drawn from nature, has little, excepting tameness, to distinguish it from the Gibbies and Sawnies which had hitherto possession of the stage as the popular representatives of the Scottish nation. The author himself is, doubtless, of a different opinion, and labours hard to place his "Fashionable Lovers" by the side of the "West Indian," in point of merit; but the critic cannot avoid assenting to the judgment of the audience. The "Choleric Man" was next acted, and was well received, though now forgotten: and other dramatic sketches, of minor importance, were given by Cumberland to the public, before the production of his "Battle of Hastings," a tragedy, in which the language, often uncommonly striking, has more merit than the characters or the plot. The latter has the inconvenient fault of being inconsistent with history, which at once affords a hold to every critic of the most ordinary degree of information. It was successful, however, Henderson performing the principal character. Bickerstaff being off the stage, our author also wrote "Calypso," and another opera, with the view of serving a meritorious young composer, named Butler.

Neither did these dramatic labours entirely occupy Cumberland's time. He found leisure to defend the memory of his grandfather, Bentley, in a controversy with Lowth, and to plead the cause of the unhappy Daniel Perreau, over whose fate hangs a veil so mysterious. Cumberland drew up his address to the jury, an elegant and affecting piece of composition, which had much effect on the audience in general, though it failed in moving those who had the fate of the accused in their hands.

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lady's frailty. Go thy ways, old Jack! we shall hardly see thy like in thy range of character.

The satisfaction which the author must have derived from the success of his various dramatic labours, seems to have been embittered by the criticisms to which, whether just or invidious, all authors, but especially those who write for the theatre, are exposed. He acknowledges that he gave too much attention to the calumnies and abuse of the public press, and tells us, that Garrick used to call him the man without a skin. Unquestionably, toughness of hide is necessary on such occasions; but, on the whole, it will be found that they who give but slight attention to such poisoned arrows, experience least pain from their venom.

There was, indeed, in Cumberland's situation, enough to console him for greater mortifications than malevolent criticism ought to have had power to inflict. He was happy in his family, consisting of four sons and two daughters. All the former entered the king's service; the first and third as soldiers, the second and fourth in the navy. Besides these domestic blessings, Cumberland stood in the first ranks of literature, and, as a matter of course, in the first rank in society, to which, in England, successful literature is a ready passport. His habits and manners qualified him for enjoying this distinguished situation, and his fortune, including the profits of his office, and his literary revenues, seems not to have been inadequate to his maintaining his ground in society. It was shortly after improved by Lord George Germain, afterwards Lord Sackville, who promoted him in the handsomest manner to the situation of Secretary to the Board of Trade, at which he had hitherto held a subordinate situation.

A distant relation also, Decimus Reynolds, constituted Mr. Cumberland heir to a considerable property, and placed his will in the hands of his intended successor, in order that he might not be tempted to alter it at a future period. Cumberland was too honourably minded to accept of it, otherwise than as a deposit to be called back at the testator's pleasure. After the course of several years, Mr. Reynolds resumed it accordingly. Another remarkable disappointment had in the meanwhile befallen, which, while it closed his further progress in political life, gave a blow to his private fortune which it never seems to have recovered, and, in the author's own words, "very strongly contrasted and changed the complexion of his latter days from that of the preceding ones."

In the year 1780, hopes were entertained of detaching Spain from the hostile confederacy by which Britain was all but overwhelmed. That kingdom could not but dread the example held out by the North Americans to their own colonies. It was supposed possible to open a negotiation with the minister, Florida Blanca, and Richard Cumberland was the agent privately entrusted with conducting this political intrigue. He was to proceed in a frigate to Lisbon, under pretence of a voyage for health or pleasure; and either to go on to Madrid, or to return to Britain, as he should be advised, after communicating with the Abbé Hussey, chaplain to his Catholic Majesty, the secret agent in this important affair. Mrs. Cumberland and her daughters accom-

panied him on this expedition. On the voyage, the envoy had an opportunity, precious to an author and dramatist, of seeing British courage displayed on its own proper element, by an action betwixt the "Milford" and a French frigate, in which the latter was captured. He celebrated this action in a very spirited sea-song, which we remember popular some years afterwards.

There was one point of the utmost consequence in the proposed treaty, a point which always has been so in negotiations with Spain, and which will again become so whenever she shall regain her place in the European republic. This point respects Gibraltar. There is little doubt that the temptation of recovering this important fortress was the bait which drew the Spanish nation into the American war; and could this fortress have been ceded to its natural possessor, mere regard to the Family Compact would not have opposed any insurmountable obstacle to a separate peace with England. But the hearts of the English people were as unalterably fixed on retaining this badge of conquest, as those of the Spaniards upon regaining it; and in truth its surrender must have been generally regarded at home and abroad as a dereliction of national honour, and a confession of national weakness. Mr. Cumberland was, therefore instructed not to proceed to Madrid until he should learn from the Abbé Hussey whether the cession of this important fortress was, or was not, to be made, on the part of Spain, the basis of the proposed negotiation. In the former event, the secret envoy of England was not to advance to Madrid; but, on the contrary, to return to Britain. It was to ascertain this point that Hussey went to Madrid; but unhappily his letters to Cumberland, who remained at Lisbon, while they encouraged him to try the event of a negotiation, being desirous perhaps, on his own account, that the negotiations should not be broken off, gave him no assurances whatever upon the point by which his motions were to be regulated. Walpole, the British Minister at Lisbon, seems to have seen through the Abbé's duplicity, and advised Cumberland to conform implicitly to his instructions, and either return home, or at least not leave Lisbon without fresh orders from England. Unluckily, Mr. Cumberland had adopted the idea that delay would be fatal to the success of the treaty, and, sanguine respecting the peaceful dispositions of the Spanish ministry, and confident in the integrity of Hussey, he resolved to proceed to Madrid upon his own responsibility—a temerity against which the event ought to warn all political agents.

The following paragraph of a letter to Lord Hillsborough, shows Mr. Cumberland's sense of the risk which he thought it his duty to incur:—

"I am sensible I have taken a step which exposes me to censure upon failure of success, unless the reasons on which I have acted be weighed with candour, and even with indulgence. In the decision I have taken for entering Spain, I have had no other object but to keep alive a treaty to which any backwardness or evasion on my part

would, I am persuaded, be immediate extinction. I know where my danger lies; but as my endeavours for the public service, and the honour of your administration, are sincere, I have no doubt that I shall obtain your protection."

From this quotation, to which others might be added, it is evident that, even in Cumberland's own eyes, nothing but his success could entirely vindicate him from the charge of officious temerity; and the events which were in the meantime occurring in London, removed this chance to an incalculable distance. When he arrived at Madrid, he found Florida Blanca in full possession of the whole history of the mob termed Lord George Gordon's, and, like foreigners on all such occasions, bent to perceive in the explosion of a popular tumult the downfall of the British monarch and ministry. A negotiation, of a delicate nature at any rate, and opened under such auspices, could hardly be expected to prosper, although Mr. Cumberland did his best to keep it alive. Under a reluctant permission of the British ministry, rather extorted than granted, the envoy resided about twelve months in Madrid, trying earnestly to knit the bonds of amity between ministers, who seem to have had little serious hope or intention of pacification, until at length Cumberland's return was commanded in express terms, on the 18th January, 1781. The point upon which his negotiation finally shipwrecked, was that very article to which his instructions from the beginning had especially directed him, the cession of Gibraltar. According to Cumberland, the Spaniards only wanted to talk on this subject; and if he had been permitted to have given accommodation in a matter of mere punctilio, the object of a separate treaty might have been accomplished. To this sanguine statement we can give no credit. Spain was at the very moment employed in actively combining the whole strength of her kingdom for the recovery of this fortress, with which she naturally esteemed her national honour peculiarly connected. She was bribed by the promise of the most active and powerful assistance from France; and it is very improbable that her ministry would have sacrificed the high hopes which they entertained of carrying this important place by force of arms, in exchange for anything short of its specific surrender.

Still, however, as Mr. Cumberland acted with the most perfect good faith, and with a zeal, the fault of which was only its excess, the reader can scarce be prepared, by our account of his errors, for the unworthy treatment to which he was subjected. Our author affirms, and we must presume with perfect accuracy, that when he set out upon this mission, besides receiving a thousand pounds in hand, he had assurance from the Secretary of the Treasury, that all bills drawn by Mr. Cumberland on his own bank, should be instantly replaced from the treasury; and he states, that, notwithstanding this positive pledge, accompanied by the naming a very large sum as placed at his discretion, no one penny was ever so replaced by government; and that he was obliged to repay from his private fortune, to a ruinous extent.

the bankers who had advanced money on his private credit; for which, by no species of appeal, or application, was he ever able to obtain reimbursement.

Whatever may be thought of Mr. Cumberland's political prudence in venturing beyond his commission, or of his sanguine disposition, which too long continued to hope a favourable issue to a desperate negotiation, there can be no doubt that he was suffered to remain at Madrid, in the character of a British agent, recognised as such by the ministry, in constant correspondence with the Secretary of State, and receiving from him directions respecting his residence at, or departure from, Madrid. There seems, therefore, to have been neither humanity nor justice in refusing the payment of his drafts, and subjecting him to such wants and difficulties, that, after having declined the liberal offer of the Spanish monarch to defray his expenses, the British agent was only extricated from the situation of a penniless bankrupt, by the compassion of a private friend, who advanced him a seasonable loan of five hundred pounds. The state of the balance due to him was indeed considerable, being no less than four thousand five hundred pounds; and it may be thought, that, as Mr. Cumberland's situation was ostensibly that of a private gentleman, travelling for health, much expense could not—at least ought not—to have attended his establishment. But his wife and daughters were in family with him; and we must allow for domestic comfort, and even some sort of splendour, in an individual, who was to hold communication with the principal servants of the Spanish crown. Besides, he had been promised an ample allowance for secret-service money, out of a sum placed at his own discretion. The truth seems to be, that Lord North's administration thought a thousand pounds was enough to have lost on an unsuccessful negotiation; and as Cumberland had certainly made himself in some degree responsible for the event, the same ministers, who, doubtless, would have had no objection to avow the issue of his intrigues had they been successful, chose, in the contrary event, to disown them.

To encounter the unexpected losses to which he was thus subjected, Mr. Cumberland was under the necessity of parting with his paternal property at an unfavourable season, and when its value could not be obtained. Shortly after followed the dissolution of the Board of Trade; and the situation of Secretary fell under Burke's economical pruning-knife—a compensation amounting only to one-half the value being appointed to the holder. Thus unpleasingly relieved from official and political duties, Mr. Cumberland adopted the prudent resolution of relinquishing his town residence, and settling himself and his family at Tunbridge, where he continued to live in retirement, yet not without the exercise of an elegant hospitality, till the final close of his long life.

The "Anecdotes of Eminent Painters in Spain," in two volumes, together with a Catalogue of the Pictures which adorn the Escurial, suffered to be made by the King of Spain's express permission, were the

principal fruits of our author's visit to the continent. Yet we ought to except the very pretty story of Nicolas Pedrosa, an excellent imitation of Le Sage, which appeared in the *Observer*, a periodical paper, which Cumberland edited with considerable success. This was one of the literary enterprises in which the author, from his acquaintance with men and manners, as well as his taste and learning, was well qualified to excel, and the work continues to afford amusement both to the general reader and the scholar. The latter is deeply interested in the curious and classical account which the *Observer* contains of the early Greek drama. In this department, Cumberland has acknowledged his debts to the celebrated Bentley, his grandfather, and to his less known, but scarce less ingenious relation, Richard Bentley, son of the celebrated scholar, and author of the comedy or farce termed "The Wishes." The aid of the former was derived from the notes which Cumberland possessed, but that of Richard Bentley was more direct.

This learned and ingenious, but rather eccentric person, was the friend of Horace Walpole, who, as his nephew Cumberland complains with some justice, exercised the rights of patronage rather unmercifully. He had been unsuccessful as a dramatic author. His comic piece entitled "The Wishes," was written with a view of ridiculing the ancient drama of Greece, particularly in their pedantic adherence to the unities. This was a purpose which could scarcely be understood by a vulgar audience, for much of it turned on the absurd structure of the stage of Athens, and the peculiar stoicism with which the Chorus, supposed to be spectators of the scene, deduce moral lessons of the justice of the gods from the atrocities which the action exhibits, but without stirring a finger to interfere or to prevent them. In ridicule of this absurdity, the Chorus in "The Wishes" are informed that a madman has just broken his way into the cellars, with a torch in his hand, to set fire to a magazine of gunpowder; on which, instead of using any means of prevention or escape, they began, in strophe and antistrophe, to lament their own condition, and exclaim against the thrice-unhappy madman, or rather the thrice-unhappy friends of the madman, who had not taken measures of securing him—or rather upon the six-times unhappy fate of themselves, thus exposed to the madman's fury. All this is a good jest to those who remember the stoicism with which the Choruses of Æschylus and Euripides view and comment upon the horrors which they witness on the stage, but it might have been esteemed caviare to the British audience in general; yet the entertainment was well received until the extravagant incident of hanging Harlequin on the stage. The author was so sensible of the absurdity of this exhibition, that he whispered to his nephew, Cumberland, during the representation—"If they do not damn this, they deserve to be d—d themselves;" and, as he spoke, the condemnation of the piece was complete. It is much to be wished that this singular performance were given to the public in print.—The notice of Richard Bentley has led us something from our purpose, which only called on us to remark, that he furnished Cumberland with those splendid translations from the Greek drama-

tists which adorn the *Observer*. The author, however, claims for himself the praise due to a version of the Clouds of Aristophanes, afterwards incorporated with this periodical work.

The modern characters introduced by Cumberland in his *Observer*, were his own; and that of the benevolent Israelite, Abraham Abrahams, was, he informs us, written upon principle, in behalf of a persecuted race. He followed up this generous intention in a popular comedy, entitled "The Jew." The dramatic character of Sheva, combining the extremes of habitual parsimony and native philanthropy, was written in the same spirit of benevolence as that of Abrahams, and was excellently performed by Jack Bannister. The public prints gave the Jews credit for acknowledging their gratitude in a very substantial form. The author, in his Memoirs, does not disguise his wish, that they had flattered him with some token of the debt which he conceives them to have owed. We think, however, that a prior token of regard should have been bestowed on the author of Joshua, in the tale of "Count Fathom:" and, moreover, we cannot be surprised that the people in question felt a portrait in which they were rendered ludicrous as well as interesting, to be something between an affront and a compliment. Few of the better class of the Jewish persuasion would, we believe, be disposed to admit either Abrahams or Sheva as fitting representatives of their tribe.

In his retreat at Tunbridge, labouring in the bosom of his family, and making their common sitting-room his place of study, Cumberland continued to compose a number of dramatic pieces, of which he himself seems almost to have forgotten the names, and of which a modern reader can trace very few. We have subjoined, however, a list of them, with his other works, taken from the Index of his Memoirs. Several were successful; several unfortunate; many never performed at all; but the spirit of the author continued unwearied and undismayed. "The Arab," "The Walloons," and many other plays, are forgotten; but the character of Penruddock, in the "Wheel of Fortune," well conceived in itself, and admirably supported by Kemble, and since by Charles Young, continues to command attention and applause. "The Carmelite," a tragedy, on the regular tragic plan, attracted much attention, as the inimitable Siddons played the part of the Lady of Saint Valois, and Kemble that of Montgomeri. The plot, however, had that fault which, after all, clings to many of Cumberland's pieces—there was a want of originality. The spectator, or reader, was by the story irresistibly reminded of "Douglas," and there was more taste than genius in the dialogue. The language was better than the sentiments; but the grace of the one could not always disguise that the other wanted novelty. "The Brothers," "The West Indian," and "The Wheel of Fortune," stand high in the list of acting plays, and we are assured, by a very competent judge, that "First Love," which we have not ourselves lately seen, is an excellent comedy, and maintains possession of the stage. The drama must have been Cumberland's favourite style of composition, for he went

on, shooting shaft after shaft at the mark which he did not always hit, and often effacing by failures the memory of triumphant successes. His plays at last amounted to upwards of fifty, and intercession and flattery were sometimes necessary to force their way to the stage. On these occasions, the Green-room traditions avow that the veteran bard did not hesitate to bestow the most copious praises on the company who were to bring forward a new piece, at the expense of their rivals of the other house, who had his tribute of commendation in their turn, when their acceptance of a play put them in his good graces. It was also said, that when many of the dramatic authors united in a complaint to the Lord Chancellor against the late Mr. Sheridan, then manager of Drury Lane, he prevented Cumberland from joining the confederacy, by offering to bring out any manuscript play which he should select for performance. But selection was not an easy task to an author, to whom all the offspring of his genius was equally dear. After much nervous hesitation, he trusted the chance to fortune; and out of a dozen of manuscript plays which lay by him, is said to have reached the manager the first which came to hand, without reading the title. Yet if Cumberland had the fondness of an author for his own productions, it must be owned he had also the fortitude to submit without murmuring, to the decision of the public. "I have had my full share of success, and I trust I have paid my tax for it," he says, good-humouredly, "always without mutiny, and very generally without murmuring. I have never irritated the town by making a sturdy stand against their opposition, when they have been pleased to point it against any one of my productions. I never failed to withdraw myself on the very first intimation that I was unwelcome; and the only offence that I have been guilty of, is, that I have not always thought the worse of a composition, only because the public did not think well of it."

The Sacred Muse shared with her dramatic sisters in Cumberland's worship. In his poem of "Calvary," he treated of a subject which, notwithstanding Klopstock's success, may be termed too lofty and too awful to be the subject of verse. He also wrote, in a literary partnership with Sir James Bland Burgess (well known as the author of "Richard Cœur de Lion," and other compositions), "The Exodiad," an epic poem, founded on sacred history. By "Calvary" the author sustained the inconvenient loss of an hundred pounds, and "The Exodiad" did not prove generally successful.

The author also undertook the task of compiling his own Memoirs; and the well-known Mr. Richard Sharpe, equally beloved for his virtues, and admired for the extent of his information, and the grace with which he communicates it, by encouraging Mr. Cumberland to become his own biographer, has performed a most acceptable service to the public. It is indeed one of the author's most pleasing works, and conveys a very accurate idea of his talents, feelings, and character, with many powerful sketches of the age which has passed away. It is impossible to read, without deep interest, Cumberland's account of the

theatre in Goodman's Fields, where Garrick, in the flower of his youth, and all the energy of genius, bounded on the stage as Lothario, and pointed out to ridicule the wittol husband and the heavy-paced Horatio; while in the last character, Mr. Quin, contrasting the old with the modern dramatic manner, surly and solemn, in a dark-green coat profusely embroidered, an enormous periwig, rolled stockings, and high-heeled, square-toed shoes, mouthed out his heroics in a deep, full, unvaried tone of declamation, accompanied by a kind of sawing action, which had more of the senate than the stage. Several characters of distinguished individuals were also drawn in the Memoirs with much force; particularly those of Doddington, Lord Halifax, Lord Sackville, George Selwyn, and others of the past age. There are some traits of satire and ridicule which are perhaps a little overcharged. This work was to have remained in manuscript until the author's death, when certainly such a publication appears with a better grace than while the autobiographer still treads the stage. But Mr. Cumberland, notwithstanding his indefatigable labours, had never been in easy circumstances since his unlucky negotiation in Spain; and in the work itself, he makes the affecting confession, that circumstances, paramount to prudence and propriety, urged him to anticipate the date of publication. The Memoirs were bought by Lackington's house for 500*l.*, and passed speedily from a quarto to an octavo shape.

We have yet to mention another undertaking of this unwearied author, at a period of life advanced beyond the ordinary date of humanity. The *Edinburgh Review* was now in possession of a full tide of popularity, and the *Quarterly Review* was just commenced, or about to commence, under powerful auspices, when Mr. Cumberland undertook the conduct of a critical work, which he entitled *the London Review* on an entirely new plan, inasmuch as each article was to be published with the author's name annexed. He was supported by assistants of very considerable talents; but, after two or three numbers, the scheme became abortive. In fact, though the plan contained an appearance of more boldness and fairness than the ordinary scheme of anonymous criticism, yet it involved certain inconveniences which its author did not foresee. It is true, no one seriously believes that, because the imposing personal plural *We* is adopted in a critical article, the reader is from that circumstance to infer that the various pieces in a periodical review are subjected to the revisal of a board of literary judges, and that each criticism is sanctioned by their general suffrage, and bears the stamp of their joint wisdom. Still, however, the use of the first person plural is so far legitimate, that in every well-governed publication of the kind, the articles, by whomsoever written, are at least revised by the competent person selected as editor, which affords a better warrant to the public for candour and caution, than if each were to rest on the separate responsibility of the individual writer. It is even more important to remark, that the anonymous character of periodical criticism has a

tendency to give freedom to literary discussion, and at the same time, to soften the animosities to which it might otherwise give rise; and, in that respect, the peculiar language which members of the senate hold towards each other, and which is for that reason called parliamentary, resembles the ordinary style of critical discussion. An author who is severely criticised in a review, can hardly be entitled, in the ordinary case, to take notice of it otherwise than as a literary question; whereas a direct and immediate collision with a particular individual, seems to tend either, on the one hand, to limit the freedom of criticism, by placing it under the regulation of a timid complaisance, or, on the other, to render it (which is, to say the least, needless) of a fiercer and more personal cast, and thereby endanger the decorum, and perhaps the peace of society. Besides this, there will always be a greater authority ascribed by the generality of readers to the oracular opinion issued from the cloudy sanctuary of an invisible body, than to the mere dictum of a man with a Christian name and surname, which may not sound much better than those of the author over whom he predominates. In the far-famed Secret Tribunal of Germany, it was the invisibility of the judges which gave them all their awful jurisdiction.

So numerous were Cumberland's publications, that, having hurried through the greater part of them, we have yet to mention his novels, though it is as a writer of fictitious history he is here introduced. They were three in number, "Arundel," "Henry," and "John de Lancaster." The two first were deservedly well received by the public; the last was a labour of old age, and was less fortunate. It would be altogether unfair to dwell upon it, as forming a part of those productions on which the author's literary reputation must permanently rest.

"Arundel," the first of these novels, was hastily written during the residence of a few weeks at Brighthelmstone, and sent to the press by detached parcels. It showed at the first glance what is seldom to be found in novels, the certainty that the author had been well acquainted with schools, with courts, and with fashionable life, and knew the topics on which he was employing his pen. The style, also, was easy and clear, and the characters boldly and firmly sketched. Cumberland, in describing Arundel's feelings at exchanging his college society, and the pursuits of learning, to become secretary to the Earl of G., unquestionably remembered the alteration of his own destination in early life. But there is no reason to think that in the darker shades of the Earl of G. he had any intention to satirize his patron, the Earl of Halifax, whom he paints in his Memoirs in much more agreeable colours.

The success which this work obtained, without labour, induced the author to write "Henry," on which he bestowed his utmost attention. He formed it upon Fielding's model, and employed two years in polishing and correcting the style. Perhaps it does not, after all, claim such great precedence over "Arundel" as the labour of the

author induced him to expect. Yet it would be unjust to deny to "Henry" the praise of an excellent novel. There is much beauty of description, and considerable display of acquaintance with English life in the lower ranks; indeed, Cumberland's clowns, sketched from his favourite men of Kent, amongst whom he spent his life, may be placed by the side of similar portraits by the first masters.

Above all, the character of Ezekiel Daw, though the outline must have been suggested by that of Abraham Adams, is so well distinguished by original and spirited conception, that it may pass for an excellent original. The Methodists, as they abhor the lighter arts of literature, and perhaps contemn those which are more serious, have, as might have been expected, met much rough usage at the hands of novelists and dramatic authors, who generally represent them either as idiots or hypocrites. A very different feeling is due to many, perhaps to most, of this enthusiastic sect; nor is it rashly to be inferred, that he who makes religion the general object of his life, is for that sole reason to be held either a fool or an impostor. The professions of strict piety are inconsistent with open vice, and therefore must, in the general case, lead men to avoid the secret practice of what, openly known, must be attended with loss of character; and thus the Methodists, and other rigid sectaries, oppose to temptation the strong barriers of interest and habitual restraint, in addition to those restrictions which religion and morality impose on all men. The touch of enthusiasm connected with Methodism renders it a species of devotion, warmly affecting the feelings, and therefore peculiarly calculated to operate upon the millions of ignorant poor, whose understandings the most learned divines would in vain address by mere force of argument; and doubtless many such simple enthusiasts as Ezekiel Daw, by their well-meant and indefatigable exertions amongst the stubborn and ignorant, have been the instruments of Providence to call such men from a state of degrading and brutal profligacy, to a life more worthy of rational beings, and of the name of Christians. Thus thinking, we are of opinion that the character of Ezekiel Daw, which shows the Methodist preacher in his strength and in his weakness, bold and fervent when in discharge of his mission, simple, well-meaning, and even absurd, in the ordinary affairs of life, is not only an exquisite, but a just portrait.

Cumberland seems to have been less happy in some of the incidents of low life which he has introduced. He forced, as we have some reason to suspect, his own elegance of ideas, into an imitation of Fielding's scenes of this nature; and, as bashful men sometimes turn impudent in labouring to be easy, our ingenious author has occasionally, in his descriptions of Zachary Cawdle and his spouse, become disgusting, when he meant to be humorous.

The author of "Henry" piqued himself particularly on the conduct of the story, but we confess ourselves unable to discover much sufficient reason. His skein is neither more artfully perplexed, nor more happily disentangled, than in many tales of the same kind;

there is the usual, perhaps we should call it the necessary, degree of improbability, for which the reader must make the usual and necessary allowance, and little can be said in this respect, either to praise or censure the author. But there is one series of incidents, connected with a train of sentiment rather peculiar to Cumberland, which may be traced through several of his dramas, which appears in "Arundel," and which makes a principal part of the interest in "Henry." He had a peculiar taste in love affairs, which induced him to reverse the usual and natural practice of courtship, and to throw upon the softer sex the task of wooing, which is more gracefully, as well as naturally, the province of the man. In "Henry," he has carried this farther, and endowed his hero with all the self-denial of the Hebrew patriarch, when he has placed him within the influence of a seductive being, much more fascinating in her address, than the frail Egyptian matron. In this point, Cumberland either did not copy his master, Fielding, at all, or, what cannot be conceived of an author so acute, he mistook for serious that author's ironical account of the continence of Joseph Andrews. We do not desire to bestow many words on this topic; but we are afraid, such is the universal inaccuracy of moral feeling in this age, that a more judicious author would not have striven against the stream, by holding up his hero as an example of what is likely to create more ridicule than imitation.

It might be also justly urged against the author, that the situations in which Henry is placed with Susan May, exceed the decent licence permitted to modern writers; and certainly they do so. But Cumberland himself entertained a different opinion, and concludes with this apology:—"If, in my zeal to exhibit virtue triumphant over the most tempting allurements, I have painted those allurements in too vivid colours, I am sorry, and ask pardon of all those who think the moral did not heal the mischief."

Another peculiarity of our author's plot is, that an affair of honour, a duel either designed or actually fought, forms an ordinary part of them. This may be expected in fictitious history, as a frequent incident, since the remains of the Gothic customs survive in that particular only, and since the indulgence which it yields to the angry passions gives an opportunity, valuable to the novelist, of stepping beyond the limits prescribed by the ordinary rules of society, and introducing scenes of violence, without incurring the charge of improbability. But Cumberland himself had something of a chivalrous disposition. His mind was nurtured in sentiments of honour, and in the necessity of maintaining reputation with the hazard of life; in which he resembled another dramatic poet, the celebrated author of "Douglas," who was also an enthusiast on the point of honour. In private life, Cumberland has proved his courage; and in his Memoirs.he mentions, with some complacency, his having extorted from a "rough and boisterous captain of the sea" an apology for some expressions reflecting on his friend and patron, Lord Sackville. In his Memoirs, he dwells with pleasure on the attachment shown to him by two companies of Volun-

teers, raised in the town of Tunbridge, and attaches considerable importance to the commission of Commandant, with which their choice had invested him. They presented their commander with a sword, and, when their pay was withdrawn, offered to continue their service, gratuitously, under him.

The long and active literary life of this amiable man and ingenious author, was concluded on the 7th May, 1811, in his eightieth year, at the house of Mr. Henry Fry, in Bedford Place, Russell Square, and he was interred in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey.

His literary executors were Mr. Richard Sharpe, already mentioned, Mr. Rogers, the distinguished author of "The Pleasures of Memory," and Sir James Bland Burgess; but we have seen none of his posthumous works, except "Retrospection," a poem in blank verse, which appeared in 1812, and which appears to have been wrought up out of the ideas which had suggested themselves, while he was engaged in writing his Memoirs.

Mr. Cumberland had the misfortune to outlive his lady and several of his family. His surviving offspring were Charles, who, we believe, held high rank in the army, and William, a post-captain in the navy. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, married Lord Edward Bentinck, son of the Duke of Portland; his second, Sophia, was less happily wedded to William Badcock, Esq., who died in the prime of life, and left a family of four grandchildren, whom Chancery awarded to the care of Mr. Cumberland. His third surviving daughter was Frances Marianne, born during his unlucky embassy to Spain. To her the author affectionately inscribed his Memoirs, "as having found, in her filial affection, all the comforts that the best of friends could give, and derived, from her talents and understanding, all the enjoyments that the most pleasing of companions could communicate."

In youth, Mr. Cumberland must have been handsome; in age, he possessed a pleasing external appearance, and the polite ease of a gentleman accustomed to the best company. In society he was eloquent, well-informed, and full of anecdote; a willing dealer in the commerce of praise, or—for he took no great pains to ascertain its sincerity—we should rather say, of flattery. His conversation often showed the author in his strong and in his weak points. The foibles are well known which Sheridan embodied on the stage, in the character of Sir Fretful Plagiary. But it is not from a caricature that a just picture can be drawn, and in the little pettish sub-acidity of temper which Cumberland sometimes exhibited, there was more of humorous sadness than of ill-will, either to his critics or his contemporaries. He certainly, like most poets, was little disposed to yield to the assaults of the former, and often, like a gallant commander, drew all his forces together to defend the point which was least tenable. He was a veteran also, the last living representative of the literature of his own age, and conceived himself the surviving depository of their fame, obliged to lay lance in rest against all which was inconsistent with the rules which they had laid down or observed. In these characters it cannot be

denied, that while he was stoutly combating for the cause of legitimate comedy and the regular novel, Cumberland manifested something of personal feeling in his zeal against those contemporaries who had found new roads, or by-paths, as he thought them, to fame and popularity, and forestalled such as were scrupulously treading the beaten highway, without turning to the right or to the left. These imperfections, arising, perhaps, from natural temper, from a sense of unmerited neglect, and the pressure of disadvantageous circumstances of fortune, or from the keen spirit of rivalry proper to men of an ardent disposition, rendered irritable by the eagerness of a contest for public applause, are the foibles rather of the profession than the individual; and though the man of letters might have been more happy had he been able entirely to subdue them, they detract nothing from the character of the man of worth, the scholar, and the gentleman.

We believe Cumberland's character to have been justly, as well as affectionately, summed up in the sermon preached on occasion of his funeral, by his venerable friend, Dr. Vincent, then Dean of Westminster. "The person you now see deposited, is Richard Cumberland, an author of no small merit; his writings were chiefly for the stage, but of strict moral tendency—they were not without their faults, but these were not of a gross description. He wrote as much as any, and few wrote better; and his works will be held in the highest estimation, so long as the English language is understood. He considered the theatre as a school for moral improvement, and his remains are truly worthy of mingling with the illustrious dead which surround us. In his subjects on Divinity, you find the true Christian spirit; and may God, in is mercy, assign him the true Christian reward!"

Catalogue of Cumberland's Works, from the Index to his Memoirs.

Epic.

CALVARY.
EXODIAD.

Dramatic.

ARAB.
BANISHMENT OF CICERO.
BATTLE OF HASTINGS.
BRUTUS THE ELDER.
BOX-LOBBY CHALLENGE.
BROTHERS.
CHOLERIC MAN.
COUNTRY ATTORNEY.
CALYPSO.
CARACTACUS.
CARMELITE.
CLOUDS, FROM THE GREEK OF ARISTOPHANES.
DEPENDANT.
DAYS OF GERI.
DON PEDRO.
ECCENTRIC LOVER.
FASHIONABLE LOVER.
FALSE DEMETRIUS.
FALSE IMPRESSIONS.
FIRST LOVE.
HINT TO HUSBANDS.
IMPOSTOR.
JEW.
JOANNA OF MONTFAUCON; A DRAMATIC ROMANCE.
LAST OF THE FAMILY.
MYSTERIOUS HUSBAND.
NATURAL SON.
NOTE OF HAND.
SAILOR'S DAUGHTER.
SHAKSPEARE IN THE SHADES.
TIMON OF ATHENS.
TORRENDAL.

WALLOONS.
WAT TYLER.
WEST INDIAN.
WHEEL OF FORTUNE.
WIDOW OF DELPHI.
WORD FOR NATURE.

Fugitive Pieces.

AFFECTATION.
LINES TO PRINCESS AMELIA.
AVARICE.
DREAMS.
ENVY.
EPILOGUE TO THE ARAB.
FRAGMENT.
HAMLET.
HAMMOND.
HUMILITY.
JUDGES.
VERSES TO DR. JAMES.
—— LORD MANSFIELD.
—— ON NELSON'S DEATH.
ODE TO THE SUN.
LINES ADDRESSED TO PITT.
—— ON PRIDE
—— ON PRUDERY.
—— TO THE PRINCE OF WALES.
LINES TO ROMNEY THE PAINTER.
ELEGY ON ST. MARK'S EVE.
TRANSLATIONS FROM THE TROADES.
—— —— FROM VIRGIL.

Prose Publications.

CURTIUS REDEEMED FROM THE GULF.
EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION.
CONTROVERSY WITH LOWTH ON THE SUBJECT OF DR. BENTLEY.

Miscellaneous.

ANECDOTES OF EMINENT PAINTERS IN SPAIN.
CATALOGUE OF PAINTINGS IN THE KING OF SPAIN'S PALACE.
SERMONS.
PERIODICAL PAPERS IN THE OBSERVER.
TRANSLATIONS OF THE PSALMS.
MEMOIRS.

Novels.

ARUNDEL.
HENRY.
JOHN DE LANCASTER.

To this formidable list there remain yet to be added the critical papers written by the author for the *London Review*; "Retrospection," a poem, in blank verse, on the author's own past life; and perhaps other publications, unknown to the Editor.

ABBOTSFORD, *December*, 1824.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

OUR biographical notices of distinguished Novelists were in some degree proportioned to the space which their labours occupy in the Collection for which these sketches were originally written. On that principle, the present subject, so interesting in every other point of view, could not be permitted long to detain us. The circumstances also of Dr. Goldsmith's life, his early struggles with poverty and distress, the success of his brief and brilliant career after he had become distinguished as an author, are so well known, and have been so well and so often told, that a short outline is all that ought here to be attempted.

Oliver Goldsmith was born on the 29th November, 1728, at Pallas (or rather Palice), in the parish of Farney, and county of Longford, in Ireland, where his father, the Rev. Charles Goldsmith, a minister of the Church of England, at that time resided. This worthy clergyman, whose virtues his celebrated son afterwards rendered immortal, in the character of the Village Preacher, had a family of seven children, for whom he was enabled to provide but very indifferently. He obtained ultimately a benefice in the county of Roscommon, but died early; for the careful researches of the Rev. John Graham of Lifford have found his widow *nigra veste senescens*, residing with her son Oliver in Ballymahon, so early as 1740. Among the shop accounts of a petty grocer of the place, Mrs. Goldsmith's name occurs frequently as a customer for trifling articles; on which occasions Master Noll appears to have been his mother's usual emissary. He was recollected, however, in the neighbourhood by more poetical employments, as that of playing on the flute, and wandering in solitude on the shores, or among the islands of the river Inny, which is remarkably beautiful at Ballymahon.

Oliver early distinguished himself by the display of lively talents, as well as by that uncertainty of humour which is so often attached to genius, as the slave in the chariot of the Roman triumph. An uncle by affinity, the Rev. Thomas Contarine, undertook the expense of affording to so promising a youth the advantages of a scholastic education. He was put to school at Edgeworths-town, and, in June, 1744, was sent to Dublin College as a sizar; a situation which subjected him to much discouragement and ill-usage, especially as he had the misfortune to fall under the charge of a brutal tutor.

On 15th June, 1747, Goldsmith obtained his only academical laurel,

being an Exhibition on the foundation of Erasmus Smythe, Esq. Some indiscreet frolic induced him soon afterwards to quit the University for a period; and he appears thus early to have commenced that sort of idle strolling life, which has often great charms for youths of genius, because it frees them from every species of subjection, and leaves them full masters of their own time and their own thoughts; a liberty which they do not feel too dearly bought, at the expense of fatigue, of hunger, and of all the other inconveniences incidental to those who travel without money. Those who can recollect journeys of this kind, with all the shifts, necessities, and petty adventures, which attend them, will not wonder at the attractions which they had for such a youth as Goldsmith. Notwithstanding these erratic expeditions, he was admitted Bachelor of Arts in 1749.

Goldsmith's persevering friend, Mr. Contarine, seems to have recommended the direction of his nephew's studies to medicine, and in the year 1752 he was settled at Edinburgh to pursue that science. Of his residence in Scotland, Goldsmith retained no favourable recollections. He was thoughtless, and he was cheated; he was poor, and he was nearly starved. Yet, in a very lively letter from Edinburgh, addressed to Robert Brianton of Ballymahon, he closes a sarcastic description of the country and its inhabitants, with the good-humoured candour which made so distinguished a part of his character. "An ugly and a poor man is society only for himself, and such society the world lets me enjoy in great abundance. Fortune has given you circumstances, and Nature a power to look charming in the eyes of the fair. Nor do I envy my dear Bob such blessings, while I may sit down and laugh at the world and at myself, the most ridiculous object in it."

From Edinburgh our student passed to Leyden, but not without the diversities of an arrest for debt, a captivity of seven days at Newcastle, from having been found in company with some Scotchmen in the French service, and the no less unpleasing variety of a storm. At Leyden, Goldsmith was peculiarly exposed to a temptation which he never at any period of his life could easily resist. The opportunities of gambling were frequent,—he seldom declined them, and was at length stripped of every shilling.

In this hopeless condition Goldsmith commenced his travels, with one shirt in his pocket, and a devout reliance on Providence. It is understood, that in the narrative of George, eldest son of the Vicar of Wakefield, the author gave a sketch of the resources which enabled him, on foot and without money, to make the tour of Europe. Through Germany and Flanders he had recourse to his violin, in which he was tolerably skilled; and a lively tune usually procured him a lodging in some peasant's cottage for the evening. In Italy, where his musical skill was held in less esteem, he found hospitality by disputing at the monasteries, in the character of a travelling scholar, upon certain philosophical theses, which the learned inhabitants were obliged, by their foundation, to uphold against all impugners. Thus, he obtained

sometimes money, sometimes lodgings. He must have had other resources to procure both, which he has not thought proper to intimate. The foreign universities afford similar facilities to poor scholars with those presented by the monasteries. Goldsmith resided at Padua for several months, and is said to have taken a degree at Louvain. Thus far is certain, that an account of the tour made by so good a judge of human nature, in circumstances so singular, would have made one of the most entertaining books in the world; and it is both wonder and pity, that Goldsmith did not hit upon a publication of his travels, amongst the other literary resources in which his mind was fertile. He was not ignorant of the advantages which his mode of travelling had opened to him. "Countries," he says, in his "Essay on Polite Literature in Europe," "wear very different appearances to travellers of different circumstances. A man who is whirled through Europe in his postchaise, and the pilgrim who walks the great tour on foot, will form very different conclusions. *Haud inexpertus loquor.*" Perhaps he grew ashamed of the last admission, which he afterwards omitted. Goldsmith spent about twelve months in these wanderings, and landed in England in the year 1746, after having perambulated France, Italy, and part of Germany.

Poverty was now before our author in all its bitterness. His Irish friends had long renounced or forgotten him; and the wretched post of usher to an academy, of which he has drawn so piteous a picture in George's account of himself, was his refuge from actual starving. Unquestionably, his description was founded on personal recollections, where he says, "I was up early and late: I was browbeat by the master; hated for my ugly face by the mistress; worried by the boys within; and never permitted to stir out, to seek civility abroad." This state of slavery he underwent at Peckham Academy, and had such bitter recollection thereof, as to be offended at the slightest allusion to it. An acquaintance happening to use the proverbial phrase, "Oh, that is all a holiday at Peckham," Goldsmith reddened, and asked if he meant to affront him. From this miserable condition he escaped with difficulty, to that of journeyman, or rather shop-porter, to a chemist in Fish Street Hill, in whose service he was recognised by Dr. Sleigh,* his countryman and fellow-student at Edinburgh, who, to his eternal honour, relieved Oliver Goldsmith from this state of slavish degradation.

Under the auspices of his friend and countryman, Goldsmith commenced practice as a physician about the Bankside, and afterwards near the Temple; and although unsuccessful in procuring fees, had soon plenty of patients. It was now that he first thought of having recourse to that pen, which afterwards afforded the public so much delight. He wrote, he laboured, he compiled; he is described by one contemporary as wearing a rusty full-trimmed black suit, the very

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* The Dr. Sligo of Foote's farce, "The Devil upon Two Sticks in London."

livery of the Muses, with his pockets stuffed with papers, and his head with projects; gradually he forced himself and his talents into notice, and was at last enabled to write, in one letter to a friend, that he was too poor to be gazed at, but too rich to need assistance;* and to boast in another, of the refined conversation which he was sometimes admitted to partake in.

He now circulated proposals for publishing, by subscription, his "Essay on Polite Literature in Europe," the profits of which he destined to equipping himself for India, having obtained from the Company the appointment of physician to one of their factories on the coast of Coromandel. But to rise in literature was more his desire than to increase his fortune. "I eagerly long," he said, "to embrace every opportunity to separate myself from the vulgar, as much in my circumstances as I am already in my sentiments. I find I want constitution and a strong steady disposition, which alone makes men great. I will, however, correct my faults, since I am conscious of them."

Goldsmith's versatile talents and ready pen soon engaged him in the service of the booksellers; and doubtless the touches of his spirit and humour were used to enliven the dull pages of many a sorry miscellany and review; a mode of living which, joined to his own improvidence, rendered his income as fluctuating as his occupation. He wrote many essays for various periodical publications, and afterwards collected them into one volume, finding that they were unceremoniously appropriated by his contemporaries. In the preface, he compares himself to the fat man in a famine, who, when his fellow-sufferers propose to feast on the superfluous part of his person, insisted with some justice on having the first slice himself. But his most elaborate effort in this style is the "Citizen of the World;" letters supposed to be written by a Chinese philosopher, resident in England, in imitation of the "Lettres Persannes" of Montesquieu. Still, however, though subsisting thus precariously, he was getting forward in society; and had already, in the year 1761, made his way as far as Dr. Johnson, who seems, from their first acquaintance till death separated them, to have entertained for Goldsmith the most sincere friendship, regarding his genius with respect, his failings with indulgence, and his person with affection.

It was probably soon after this first acquaintance, that necessity, the parent of so many works of genius, gave birth to the "Vicar of Wakefield." The circumstances attending the sale of the work to the fortunate publisher, are too singular to be told in any other words than those of Johnson, as reported by his faithful chronicler, Boswell.

"I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith, that he was in great distress; and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a

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* Letter to Daniel Hodson, Esq.

guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

Newberry, the purchaser of the "Vicar of Wakefield," best known to the present generation by recollection of their infantine studies,* was a man of worth as well as wealth, and the frequent patron of distressed genius. When he completed the bargain, which he probably entered into partly from compassion, partly from deference to Johnson's judgment, he had so little confidence in the value of his purchase, that the "Vicar of Wakefield" remained in manuscript until the publication of the "Traveller" had established the fame of the author.

For this beautiful poem Goldsmith had collected materials during his travels; and a part of it had been actually written in Switzerland, and transmitted from that country to the author's brother, the Rev. Dr. Henry Goldsmith. His distinguished friend, Dr. Johnson, aided him with several general hints; and is said to have contributed the sentiment which Goldsmith has so beautifully versified in the concluding lines.

The publication of the "Traveller" gave the author all that celebrity which he had so long laboured to attain. He now assumed the professional dress of the medical science, a scarlet cloak, wig, sword, and cane, and was admitted as a valued member of that distinguished society, which afterwards formed the Literary Club, or as it is more commonly called, emphatically, *The* Club. For this he made certain sacrifices, renouncing some of the public places which he had formerly found convenient in point of expense and amusement; not without regret, for he used to say, "In truth, one must make some sacrifices to obtain good society; for here am I shut out of several places where I used to play the fool very agreeably." It often happened amid those sharper wits with whom he now associated, that the simplicity of his character, mingled with an inaccuracy of expression, an undistinguishing spirit of vanity, and a hurriedness of conception, which led him often into absurdity, rendered Dr. Goldsmith in some degree the butt of the company. Garrick, in particular, who probably presumed somewhat on the superiority of a theatrical manager

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* He published numerous books for children towards the close of the 18th century. The toy-books of Scott's childhood.—[EDIT.]

over a dramatic author, shot at him many shafts of small epigrammatic wit. It is likely that Goldsmith began to feel that this spirit was carried too far, and, to check it in the best taste, he composed his celebrated poem of "Retaliation," in which the characters and failings of his associates are drawn with satire, at once pungent and good-humoured. Garrick is smartly chastised; Burke, the Dinner-bell of the House of Commons, is not spared; and of all the more distinguished names of the Club, Johnson, Cumberland, and Reynolds alone escape the lash of the satirist. The former is not mentioned, and the two latter are even dismissed with unqualified and affectionate applause. "Retaliation" had the effect of placing the author on a more equal footing with his society than he had ever before assumed. Even against the despotism of Johnson, though much respecting him, and as much beloved by him, Goldsmith made a more spirited stand than was generally ventured upon by the compeers of that arbitrary Sultan of literature. Of this Boswell has recorded a striking instance. Goldsmith had been descanting on the difficulty and importance of making animals in an apologue speak in character, and particularly instanced the Fable of the Little Fishes. Observing that Dr. Johnson was laughing scornfully, he proceeded smartly, "Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if *you* were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales."

To support the expense of his new dignities, Goldsmith laboured incessantly at the literary oar. The "Letters on the History of England," commonly ascribed to Lord Lyttleton, and containing an excellent and entertaining abridgment of the annals of Britain, are the work of Goldsmith. His mode of compiling them we learn from some interesting anecdotes of the author, communicated to the public by Lee Lewes, an actor of genius, whom he patronized, and with whom he often associated.

"He first read in a morning, from Hume, Rapin, and sometimes Kennet, as much as he designed for one letter, marking down the passages referred to on a sheet of paper, with remarks. He then rode or walked out with a friend or two, whom he constantly had with him; returned to dinner, spent the day generally convivially, without much drinking (which he was never in the habit of), and when he went up to bed took up his books and paper with him, where he generally wrote the chapter, or the best part of it, before he went to rest. This latter exercise cost him very little trouble, he said; for having all his materials ready for him, he wrote it with as much facility as a common letter.

"But of all his compilations, he used to say, his 'Selections of English Poetry' showed more 'the art of profession.' Here he did nothing but mark the particular passages with a red-lead pencil, and for this he got two hundred pounds—but then he used to add, 'a man shows his judgment in these selections, and he may be often twenty years of his life cultivating that judgment.'"

Goldsmith, amid these more petty labours, aspired to the honours

of the sock, and the "Good-natured Man" was produced at Covent Garden, 29th January, 1768, with the moderate success of nine nights' run. The principal character the author probably drew from the weak side of his own; for no man was more liable than Goldsmith to be gulled by pretended friends. The character of Croaker, highly comic in itself, and admirably represented by Shuter, helped to save the piece, which was endangered by the scene of the Bailiffs, then considered as too vulgar for the stage. Upon the whole, however, Goldsmith is said to have cleared five hundred pounds by this dramatic performance. He hired better chambers in the Temple, embarked more boldly in literary speculation, and unfortunately at the same time enlarged his ideas of expense, and indulged his habit of playing at games of hazard. The Memoirs, or Anecdotes, which we have before quoted, give a minute and curious description of his habits and enjoyments about this period, when he was constantly occupied with extracts, abridgments, and other arts of book-making, but at the same time working slowly, and in secret, on those immortal verses, which secure for him so high a rank among English poets.

"Goldsmith, though quick enough at prose," continues Mr. Lewes, "was rather slow in his poetry—not from the tardiness of fancy, but the time he took in pointing the sentiment, and polishing the versification. He was, by his own confession, four or five years collecting materials in all his country excursions for this poem ("The Deserted Village"), and was actually engaged in the construction of it above two years. His manner of writing poetry was this; he first sketched a part of his design in prose, in which he threw out his ideas as they occurred to him; he then sat carefully down to versify them, correct them, and add such other ideas as he thought better fitted to the subject. He sometimes would exceed his prose design by writing several verses impromptu, but these he would take uncommon pains afterwards to revise, lest they should be found unconnected with his main design.

"The writer of these Memoirs (Lee Lewes), called upon the Doctor the second morning after he had begun 'The Deserted Village,' and to him he communicated the plan of his poem. 'Some of my friends,' continued he, 'differ with me on this plan, and think this depopulation of villages does not exist—but I am myself satisfied of the fact. I remember it in my own country, and have seen it in this.' He then read what he had done of it that morning, beginning,

> 'Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
> Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
> How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
> Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
> How often have I paused on every charm,—
> The sheltered cot,—the cultivated farm,—
> The never-failing brook,—the busy mill,—
> The decent church, that topt the neighbouring hill,—
> The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
> For talking age and whispering lovers made.'

'Come,' says he, 'let me tell you this is no bad morning's work; and now, my dear boy, if you are not better engaged, I should be glad to enjoy a Shoemaker's holiday with you.' This Shoemaker's holiday was a day of great festivity to poor Goldsmith, and was spent in the following innocent manner:—

"Three or four of his intimate friends rendezvoused at his chambers, to breakfast, about ten o'clock in the morning; at eleven they proceeded by the City Road, and through the fields to Highbury Barn to dinner; about six o'clock in the evening they adjourned to White Conduit House to drink tea; and concluded the evening by supping at the Grecian or Temple Exchange Coffee-houses, or at the Globe, in Fleet Street. There was a very good ordinary of two dishes and pastry kept at Highbury Barn about this time at 10*d.* per head, including a penny to the waiter, and the company generally consisted of literary characters, a few Templars, and some citizens who had left off trade. The whole expenses of this day's fête never exceeded a crown, and oftener from three-and-sixpence to four shillings, for which the party obtained good air and exercise, good living, the example of simple manners, and good conversation."

The reception given to the "Deserted Village," so full of natural elegance, simplicity, and pathos, was of the warmest kind. The publisher showed at once his skill and generosity, by pressing upon Doctor Goldsmith a hundred pounds, which the author insisted upon returning, when upon computation he found that it came to nearly a crown for every couplet, a sum which he conceived no poem could be worth. The sale of the poem made him ample amends for this unusual instance of moderation. Lissoy, near Ballymahon, where his brother the clergyman had his living, claims the honour of being the spot from which the localities of the "Deserted Village" were derived. The church which tops the neighbouring hill, the mill, and the lake, are still pointed out; and a hawthorn has suffered the penalty of poetical celebrity, being cut to pieces by those admirers of the bard, who desired to have classical toothpick cases and tobacco-stoppers. Much of this supposed locality may be fanciful, but it is a pleasing tribute to the poet in the land of his fathers.

Goldsmith's "Abridgments of the History of Rome and England" may here be noticed. They are eminently well calculated to introduce youth to the knowledge of their studies; for they exhibit the most interesting and striking events, without entering into controversy or dry detail. Yet the tone assumed in the "History of England" drew on the author the resentment of the more zealous Whigs, who accused him of betraying the liberties of the people, when, "God knows," as he expresses himself in a letter to Langton, "I had no thought for or against liberty in my head; my whole aim being to make up a book of a decent size, and which, as Squire Richard says, would do no harm tc nobody."

His celebrated play of "She Stoops to Conquer," was Goldsmith's next work of importance. If it be the object of comedy to make an

audience laugh, Johnson says that it was better obtained by this play than by any other of the period. Lee Lewes was, for the first time, produced in a speaking character, as young Marlow, and is, therefore, entitled to record his own recollections concerning the piece.

"The first night of its performance, Goldsmith, instead of being at the theatre, was found sauntering, between seven and eight o'clock, in the Mall, St. James's Park; and it was on the remonstrance of a friend, who told him 'how useful his presence might be in making some sudden alterations which might be found necessary in the piece,' that he was prevailed on to go to the theatre. He entered the stage-door just in the middle of the fifth act, when there was a hiss at the improbability of Mrs. Hardcastle supposing herself forty miles off, though on her own grounds, and near the house. 'What's that?' says the Doctor, terrified at the sound. 'Pshaw, Doctor,' says Colman, who was standing by the side of the scene, 'don't be fearful of *squibs*, when we have been sitting almost these two hours upon a barrel of gunpowder.'

"In the 'Life of Dr. Goldsmith,' prefixed to his Works, the above reply of Colman's is said to have happened at the last rehearsal of the piece, but the fact was (I had it from the Doctor himself) as I have stated, and he never forgave it to Colman to the last hour of his life." It may be here noticed, that the leading incident of the piece was borrowed from a blunder of the author himself, who, while travelling in Ireland, actually mistook a gentleman's residence for an inn. It is remarkable enough that we ourselves are acquainted with another instance of the kind, which took place, however, in the middle rank of life.

It must be owned, that however kind, amiable, and benevolent Goldsmith showed himself to his contemporaries, more especially to such as needed his assistance, he had no small portion of the jealous and irritable spirit proper to the literary profession. He suffered a newspaper lampoon about this time to bring him into a foolish affray with Evans the editor, which did him but little credit.

In the meantime, a neglect of economy, occasional losses at play, and too great a reliance on his own versatility and readiness of talent, had considerably embarrassed his affairs. He felt the pressure of many engagements, for which he had received advances of money, and which it was, nevertheless, impossible for him to carry on with that despatch which the booksellers thought themselves entitled to expect. One of his last publications was a "History of the Earth and Animated Nature," in six volumes, which is to science what his abridgments are to history; a book which indicates no depth of research or accuracy of information, but which presents to the ordinary reader a general and interesting view of the subject, couched in the clearest and most beautiful language, and abounding with excellent reflections and illustrations. It was of this work that Johnson threw out the remark which he afterwards interwove in his

friend's epitaph,—"He is now writing a Natural History, and will make it as agreeable as a Persian Tale."

But the period of his labours was now near. Goldsmith had for some time been subject to fits of the strangury, brought on by too severe application to sedentary labours; and one of those attacks, aggravated by mental distress, produced a fever. In spite of cautions to the contrary, he had recourse to Dr. James's fever powders, from which he received no relief. He died on the 4th April, 1774, and was privately interred in the Temple burial-ground. A monument, erected by subscription in Westminster Abbey, bears a Latin inscription from the pen of Dr. Johnson:—

OLIVARI GOLDSMITH,
Poetæ, Physici, Historici,
Qui nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit,
Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit,
Sive risus essent movendi,
Sive lacrymæ,
Affectuum potens at lenis dominator.
Ingenio, sublimis, vividus, versatilis;
Oratione, grandis, nitidus, venustus.
Hoc monumentum Memoriam colent
Sodalium amor,
Amicorum fides,
Lectorum veneratio,
Natus in Hibernia Forniæ Longfordiensis,
In loco cui nomen Pallas,
Nov. XXIX. MDCCXXXI,
Eblanæ literis institutus,
Obiit Londini,
April IV. MDCCLXXIV.

This elegant epitaph was the subject of a petition to Dr. Johnson, in the form of a round robin, entreating him to substitute an English inscription, as more proper for an author who had distinguished himself entirely by works written in English; but the doctor kept his purpose.

The person and features of Dr. Goldsmith were rather unfavourable. He was a short stout man, with a round face, much marked with the smallpox, and a low forehead, which is represented as projecting in a singular manner. Yet these ordinary features were marked by a strong expression of reflection and of observation.

The peculiarities of Goldsmith's disposition have been already touched upon in the preceding narrative. He was a friend to virtue, and in his most playful pages never forgets what is due to it. A gentleness, delicacy, and purity of feeling, distinguishes whatever he wrote, and bears a correspondence to the generosity of a disposition which knew no bounds but his last guinea. It was an attribute almost essential to such a temper, that he wanted the proper guards of firmness and decision, and permitted, even when aware of their worthlessness, the intrusions of cunning and of effrontery. The story

of the "White Mice" is well known; and in the humorous "History of the Haunch of Venison," Goldsmith has recorded another instance of his being duped. This could not be entirely out of simplicity; for he, who could so well embody and record the impositions of Master Jenkinson, might surely have penetrated the schemes of more ordinary swindlers. But Goldsmith could not give a refusal; and, being thus cheated with his eyes open, no man could be a surer or easier victim to the impostors whose arts he could so well describe. He might certainly have accepted the draft on neighbour Flamborough, and indubitably would have made the celebrated bargain of the gross of green spectacles. With this gullibility of temper was mixed a hasty and eager jealousy of his own personal consequence: he unwillingly admitted that anything was done better than he himself could have performed it; and sometimes made himself ridiculous by hastily undertaking to distinguish himself upon subjects which he did not understand. But with these weaknesses, and with that of carelessness in his own affairs, terminates all that censure can say of Goldsmith. The folly of submitting to imposition may be well balanced with the universality of his benevolence; and the wit which his writings evince more than counterbalances his defects in conversation, if these could be of consequence to the present and future generations. "As a writer," says Dr. Johnson, "he was of the most distinguished class. Whatever he composed, he did it better than any other man could. And whether we regard him as a poet, as a comic writer, or as a historian, he was one of the first writers of his time, and will ever stand in the foremost class."

Excepting some short Tales, Goldsmith gave to the department of the novelist only one work—the inimitable "Vicar of Wakefield." We have seen that it was suppressed for nearly two years, until the publication of the "Traveller" had fixed the author's fame. Goldsmith had, therefore, time for revisal, but he did not employ it. He had been paid for his labour, as he observed, and could have profited nothing by rendering the work ever so perfect. This, however, was false reasoning, though not unnatural in the mouth of the author who must earn daily bread by daily labour. The narrative, which in itself is as simple as possible, might have been cleared of certain improbabilities, or rather impossibilities, which it now exhibits. We cannot, for instance, conceive how Sir William Thornhill should contrive to masquerade under the name of Burchell among his own tenantry, and upon his own estate; and it is absolutely impossible to see how his nephew, the son, doubtless, of a younger brother (since Sir William inherited both title and property), should be nearly as old as the Baronet himself. It may be added, that the character of Burchell, or Sir William Thornhill, is in itself extravagantly unnatural. A man of his benevolence would never have so long left his nephew in the possession of wealth which he employed to the worst of purposes. Far less would he have permitted his scheme upon Olivia in a great

measure to succeed, and that upon Sophia also to approach consummation; for, in the first instance, he does not interfere at all, and in the second, his intervention is accidental. These, and some other little circumstances in the progress of the narrative, might easily have been removed upon revisal.

But whatever defects occur in the tenor of the story, the admirable ease and grace of the narrative, as well as the pleasing truth with which the principal characters are designed, make the "Vicar of Wakefield" one of the most delicious morsels of fictitious composition on which the human mind was ever employed. The principal character, that of the simple Pastor himself, with all the worth and excellency which ought to distinguish the ambassador of God to man, and yet with just so much of pedantry and of literary vanity as serves to show that he is made of mortal mould, and subject to human failings, is one of the best and most pleasing pictures ever designed. It is perhaps impossible to place frail humanity before us in an attitude of more simple dignity than the Vicar, in his character of pastor, of parent, and of husband. His excellent helpmate, with all her motherly cunning and housewifely prudence, loving and respecting her husband, but counterplotting his wisest schemes, at the dictates of maternal vanity, forms an excellent counterpart. Both, with their children around them, their quiet labour and domestic happiness, compose a fireside picture of such a perfect kind, as perhaps is nowhere else equalled. It is sketched indeed from common life, and is a strong contrast to the exaggerated and extraordinary characters and incidents which are the resource of those authors, who, like Bayes, make it their business to elevate and surprise; but the very simplicity of this charming book renders the pleasure it affords more permanent. We read the "Vicar of Wakefield" in youth and in age —we return to it again and again, and bless the memory of an author who contrives so well to reconcile us to human nature. Whether we choose the pathetic and distressing incidents of the fire, the scenes at the jail, or the lighter and humorous parts of the story, we find the best and truest sentiments enforced in the most beautiful language; and perhaps there are few characters of purer dignity have been described than that of the excellent pastor, rising above sorrow and oppression, and labouring for the conversion of those felons into whose company he had been thrust by his villanous creditor. In too many works of this class, the critics must apologize for or censure particular passages in the narrative, as unfit to be perused by youth and innocence. But the wreath of Goldsmith is unsullied; he wrote to exalt virtue and expose vice; and he accomplished his task in a manner which raises him to the highest rank among British authors. We close his volume with a sigh that such an author should have written so little from the stores of his own genius, and that he should have been so prematurely removed from the sphere of literature, which he so highly adorned.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

OF all the men distinguished in this or any other age, Dr. Johnson has left upon posterity the strongest and most vivid impression, so far as person, manners, disposition, and conversation are concerned. We do but name him, or open a book which he has written, and the sound and action recall to the imagination at once his form, his merits, his peculiarities, nay, the very uncouthness of his gestures, and the deep impressive tone of his voice. We learn not only what he said, but form an idea how he said it; and have, at the same time, a shrewd guess of the secret motive why he did so, and whether he spoke in sport or in anger, in the desire of conviction, or for the love of debate. It was said of a noted wag, that his bon-mots did not give full satisfaction when published, because he could not print his face. But with respect to Dr. Johnson, this has been in some degree accomplished; and, although the present generation never saw him, yet he is, in our mind's eye, a personification as lively as that of Siddons in Lady Macbeth, or Kemble in Cardinal Wolsey.

All this, as the world well knows, arises from Johnson having found in James Boswell such a biographer, as no man but himself ever had, or ever deserved to have. The performance, which chiefly resembles it in structure, is the life of the philosopher Demophon, in Lucian; but that slight sketch is far inferior in detail and in vivacity to Boswell's "Life of Johnson," which, considering the eminent persons to whom it relates, the quantity of miscellaneous information and entertaining gossip which it brings together, may be termed, without exception, the best parlour-window book that ever was written. Accordingly, such has been the reputation which it has enjoyed, that it renders useless even the form of an abridgment, which is the less necessary in this work, as the great Lexicographer only stands connected with the department of fictitious narrative by the brief tale of "Rasselas."

A few dates and facts may be shortly recalled, for the sake of uniformity of plan, after which we will venture to offer a few remarks upon "Rasselas," and the character of its great author.

Samuel Johnson was born and educated in Lichfield, where his father was a country bookseller of some eminence, since he belonged to its magistracy. He was born 18th September, 1709. His school-

days were spent in his native city, and his education completed at Pembroke College, Oxford. Of gigantic strength of body, and mighty powers of mind, he was afflicted with that nameless disease on the spirits, which often rendered the latter useless; and externally deformed by a scrofulous complaint, the scars of which disfigured his otherwise strong and sensible countenance. The indigence of his parents compelled him to leave College upon his father's death in 1731, when he gathered in a succession of eleven pounds sterling. In poverty, however, his learning and his probity secured him respect. He was received in the best society of his native place. His first literary attempt, the translation of "Father Lobo's Voyage to Abyssinia," appeared during this period, and probably led him, at a later period, to lay in that remote kingdom the scene of his philosophical tale, which follows this essay. About the same time he married a wife considerably older than himself, and attempted to set up a school in the neighbourhood of Lichfield. The project proved unsuccessful; and in 1737, he set out to try to mend his fortunes in London, attended by David Garrick. Johnson had with him in manuscript his tragedy of "Irene," and meant to commence dramatic author; Garrick was to be bred to the law—fate had different designs for both.

There is little doubt, that upon his outset in London, Johnson felt in full force the ills which assail the unprotected scholar, whose parts are yet unknown to the public, and who must write at once for bread and for distinction. His splendid imitation of Juvenal, "London," a satire, was the first of his works which drew the attention of the public; yet neither its celebrity, nor that of its more brilliant successor, the "Vanity of Human Wishes," the deep and pathetic morality of which has often extracted tears from those whose eyes wander dry over pages professedly sentimental, could save the poet from the irksome drudgery of a writer of all work. His tragedy of "Irene" was unfortunate on the stage, and his valuable hours were consumed in obscure labour. He was fortunate, however, in a strong and virtuous power of thinking, which prevented his plunging into those excesses, in which neglected genius, in catching at momentary gratification, is so apt to lose character and respectability. While his friend, Savage, was wasting considerable powers in temporary gratification, Johnson was advancing slowly but surely into a higher class of society. The powers of his pen were supported by those of his conversation; he lost no friend by misconduct, no respect by a closer approach to intimacy, and each new friend whom he made continued still his admirer.

The booksellers, also, were sensible of his value as a literary labourer, and employed him in that laborious and gigantic task, a dictionary of the language. How it is executed is well known, and sufficiently surprising, considering that the learned author was a stranger to the Northern languages, on which English is radically grounded, and that the discoveries in grammar, since made by Horne Tooke, were then unknown. In the meantime, the publication of the "Rambler," though

not very successful during its progress, stamped the character of the author as one of the first moral writers of the age, and as eminently qualified to write, and even to improve, the English language.

In 1752 Johnson was deprived of his wife, a loss which he appears to have felt most deeply. After her death, society, the best of which was now open to a man who brought such stores to increase its pleasures, seems to have been his principal enjoyment, and his great resource when assailed by the malady of mind which embittered his solitary moments.

The "Idler," scarcely so popular as the "Rambler," followed in 1758. In 1759 "Rasselas" was hastily composed, in order to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral, and some small debts which she had contracted. This beautiful tale was written in one week, and sent in portions to the printer. Johnson told Sir Joshua Reynolds that he never afterwards read it over! The publishers paid the author a hundred pounds, with twenty-four more when the work came to a second edition.

The mode in which "Rasselas" was composed, and the purposes for which it was written, show that the author's situation was still embarrassed. But his circumstances became more easy in 1762, when a pension of 300*l.* placed him beyond the drudgery of labouring for mere subsistence. It was distinctly explained, that this grant was made on public grounds alone, and intended as homage to Johnson's services for literature. But two political pamphlets, "The False Alarm," and that upon the "Falkland Islands," afterwards showed that the author was grateful.

In 1765, pushed forward by the satire of Churchill, Johnson published his subscription Shakspeare, for which proposals had been long in circulation.

The author's celebrated "Journey to the Hebrides" was published in 1775. Whatever might be his prejudices against Scotland, its natives must concede that his remarks concerning the poverty and barrenness of the country, tended to produce those subsequent exertions which have done much to remedy the causes of reproach. The Scots were angry because Johnson was not enraptured with their scenery, which, from a defect of bodily organs he could not appreciate, or even see; and they appear to have set rather too high a rate on the hospitality paid to a stranger, when they contended it should shut the mouth of a literary traveller upon all subjects but those of panegyric. Dr. Johnson took a better way of repaying the civilities he received, by exercising kindness and hospitality in London to all such friends as he had received attention from in Scotland.

His pamphlet, entitled "Taxation no Tyranny," which drew upon nim wrath from those who supported the American cause, is written in a strain of high Toryism, and tended to promote an event pregnant with much good and evil, the separation of the mother country from the American colonies.

In 1777 he was engaged in one of his most pleasing, as well as most popular works, "The Lives of the British Poets," which he executed with a degree of critical force and talent which has seldom been concentrated.

Johnson's laborious and distinguished career terminated in 1783, when virtue was deprived of a steady supporter, society of a brilliant ornament, and literature of a successful cultivator. The latter part of his life was honoured with general applause, for none was more fortunate in obtaining and preserving the friendship of the wise and the worthy. Thus loved and venerated, Johnson might have been pronounced happy. But Heaven, in whose eyes strength is weakness, permitted his faculties to be clouded occasionally with that morbid affection of the spirits, which disgraced his talents by prejudices, and his manners by rudeness.

When we consider the rank which Dr. Johnson held, not only in literature, but in society, we cannot help figuring him to ourselves as the benevolent giant of some fairy tale, whose kindnesses and courtesies are still mingled with a part of the rugged ferocity imputed to the fabulous sons of Anak; or rather, perhaps, like a Roman Dictator, fetched from his farm, whose wisdom and heroism still relished of his rustic occupation. And there were times when, with all Johnson's wisdom, and all his wit, this rudeness of disposition, and the sacrifices and submissions which he unsparingly exacted, were so great, that even his kind and devoted admirer, Mrs. Thrale, seems at length to have thought that the honour of being Johnson's hostess was almost counterbalanced by the tax which he exacted on her time and patience.

The cause of those deficiencies in temper and manner, was no ignorance of what was fit to be done in society, or how far each individual ought to suppress his own wishes in favour of those with whom he associates; for, theoretically, no man understood the rules of good breeding better than Dr. Johnson, or could act more exactly in conformity with them, when the high rank of those with whom he was in company for the time required that he should put the necessary constraint upon himself. But during the greater part of his life, he had been in a great measure a stranger to the higher society, in which such restraint is necessary; and it may be fairly presumed that the indulgence of a variety of little selfish peculiarities, which it is the object of good breeding to suppress, became thus familiar to him. The consciousness of his own mental superiority in most companies which he frequented, contributed to his dogmatism; and when he had attained his eminence as a dictator in literature, like other potentates, he was not averse to a display of his authority: resembling in this particular Swift, and one or two other men of genius, who have had the bad taste to imagine that their talents elevated them above observance of the common rules of society. It must be also remarked, that in Johnson's time, the literary society of London was much more confined than at

present, and that he sat the Jupiter of a little circle, sometimes indeed nodding approbation, but always prompt, on the slightest contradiction, to launch the thunders of rebuke and sarcasm. He was, in a word, despotic, and despotism will occasionally lead the best dispositions into unbecoming abuse of power. It is not likely that any one will again enjoy, or have an opportunity of abusing, the singular degree of submission which was rendered to Johnson by all around him. The unreserved communications of friends, rather than the spleen of enemies, have occasioned his character being exposed in all its shadows, as well as its lights. But those, when summed and counted, amount only to a few narrow-minded prejudices concerning country and party, from which few ardent tempers remain entirely free, an over-zeal in politics, which is an ordinary attribute of the British character, and some violences and solecisms in manners, which left his talents, morals, and benevolence, alike unimpeachable.

Of "Rasselas," translated into so many languages, and so widely circulated through the literary world, the merits have been long justly appreciated. It was composed in solitude and sorrow; and the melancholy cast of feeling which it exhibits, sufficiently evinces the temper of the author's mind. The resemblance, in some respects, betwixt the tenor of the moral and that of "Candide," is striking, and Johnson himself admitted, that if the authors could possibly have seen each other's manuscript, they could not have escaped the charge of plagiarism. But they resemble each other like a wholesome and a poisonous fruit. The object of the witty Frenchman is to induce a distrust of the wisdom of the great Governor of the Universe, by presuming to arraign him of incapacity before the creatures of his will. Johnson uses arguments drawn from the same premises, with the benevolent view of encouraging men to look to another and a better world, for the satisfaction of wishes, which in this seem only to be awakened in order to be disappointed. The one is a fiend—a merry devil, we grant—who scoffs at and derides human miseries; the other, a friendly though grave philosopher, who shows us the nothingness of earthly hopes, to teach us that our affections ought to be placed higher.

The work can scare be termed a narrative, being in a great measure void of incident; it is rather a set of moral dialogues on the various vicissitudes of human life, its follies, its fears, its hopes, its wishes, and the disappointment in which all terminate. The style is in Johnson's best manner; enriched and rendered sonorous by the triads and quaternions which he so much loved, and balanced with an art which perhaps he derived from the learned Sir Thomas Brown. The reader may sometimes complain, with Boswell, that the unalleviated picture of human helplessness and misery, leaves sadness upon the mind after perusal. But the moral is to be found in the conclusion of the "Vanity of Human Wishes," a poem which

treats of the same melancholy subject, and closes with this sublime strain of morality :—

> Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
> Obedient passions, and a will resigned ;
> For Love, which scarce collective man can fill ;
> For Patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill ;
> For Faith, that, panting for a happier seat,
> Counts death kind nature's signal of retreat :
> These goods for man the laws of Heaven ordain ;
> These goods He grants, who grants the power to gain ;
> With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
> And makes the happiness she cannot find.

BATTERSEA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

LAURENCE STERNE.

LAURENCE STERNE was one of those few authors who have anticipated the labours of the biographer, and left to the world what they desired should be known of their family and their life. It is but a slight sketch, however, addressed to his daughter, and stops short just where the reader becomes most interested in its progress, being very succinct in all which regards the author's personal history.

"Roger Sterne,* (says this narrative), grandson to Archbishop Sterne, Lieutenant in Handaside's regiment, was married to Agnes Hebert, widow of a captain of a good family. Her family name was (I believe) Nuttle;—though, upon recollection, that was the name of her father-in-law, who was a noted sutler in Flanders, in Queen Anne's wars, where my father married his wife's daughter (N.B. he was in debt to him), which was in September 25, 1711, old style.—This Nuttle had a son by my grandmother,—a fine person of a man, but a graceless whelp!—what became of him I know not.—The family (if any left) live now at Clonmel, in the south of Ireland; at which town I was

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* Mr. Sterne was descended from a family of that name in Suffolk, one of which settled in Nottinghamshire. The following genealogy is extracted from Thoresby's "Ducatus Leodinensis," p. 215.

SIMON STERNE, of Mansfield.

Dr. Richard Sterne, Archbishop of York, ob. June, 1683.	=	Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. Dickinson, ob. 1670.			
1	2	3			
Richard Sterne, of York and Kilvington, Esq. 1700.	William Sterne, of Mansfield.	Simon Sterne, of Elvington and Halifax, ob. 1703.	=	Mary, daughter and heiress of Roger Jaques, of Elvington, near York.	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Richard.	ROGER.	Jaques, LL.D. ob. 1759.	Mary.	Elizabeth.	Frances.
Richard.					

LAURENCE STERNE.

born, November 24, 1713, a few days after my mother arrived from Dunkirk.—My birthday was ominous to my poor father, who was the day of our arrival, with many other brave officers, broke, and sent adrift into the wide world, with a wife and two children; the elder of which was Mary. She was born at Lisle, in French Flanders, July 10, 1712, new style.—This child was the most unfortunate:—She married one Weemans, in Dublin, who used her most unmercifully;—spent his substance, became a bankrupt, and left my poor sister to shift for herself; which she was able to do but for a few months, for she went to a friend's house in the country, and died of a broken heart. She was a most beautiful woman, of a fine figure, and deserved a better fate.—The regiment in which my father served being broke, he left Ireland as soon as I was able to be carried, with the rest of his family, and came to the family seat at Elvington, near York, where his mother lived. She was daughter to Sir Roger Jacques, and an heiress. There we sojourned for about ten months, when the regiment was established, and our household decamped with bag and baggage for Dublin.—Within a month of our arrival, my father left us, being ordered to Exeter; where, in a sad winter, my mother and her two children followed him, travelling from Liverpool, by land, to Plymouth.—(Melancholy description of this journey not necessary to be transmitted here.)—In twelve months we were all sent back to Dublin.—My mother, with three of us (for she lay-in at Plymouth of a boy, Joram), took ship at Bristol, for Ireland, and had a narrow escape from being cast away, by a leak springing up in the vessel.—At length, after many perils and struggles, we got to Dublin.—There my father took a large house, furnished it, and in a year and a half's time spent a great deal of money. In the year one thousand seven hundred and nineteen, all unhinged again; the regiment was ordered, with many others, to the Isle of Wight, in order to embark for Spain in the Vigo expedition. We accompanied the regiment, and were driven into Milford Haven, but landed at Bristol; from thence, by land, to Plymouth again, and to the Isle of Wight;—where, I remember, we stayed encamped some time before the embarkation of the troops—(in this expedition, from Bristol to Hampshire, we lost poor Joram,—a pretty boy, four years old, of the smallpox)—my mother, sister, and myself, remained at the Isle of Wight during the Vigo expedition, and until the regiment had got back to Wicklow, in Ireland; from whence my father sent for us.—We had poor Joram's loss supplied, during our stay in the Isle of Wight, by the birth of a girl, Anne, born September the twenty-third, one thousand seven hundred and nineteen.—This pretty blossom fell at the age of three years, in the barracks of Dublin. She was, as I well remember, of a fine delicate frame, not made to last long,—as were most of my father's babes. We embarked for Dublin, and had all been cast away by a most violent storm; but through the intercessions of my mother, the captain was prevailed upon to turn back into Wales, where we stayed a month, and at length got into Dublin, and travelled by land to Wicklow; where my father had for

some weeks given us over for lost. We lived in the barracks at Wicklow one year—(one thousand seven hundred and twenty) when Devijeher (so called after Colonel Devijeher) was born; from thence we decamped to stay half a year with Mr. Featherston, a clergyman, about seven miles from Wicklow; who, being a relation of my mother's, invited us to his parsonage at Animo.* It was in this parish, during our stay, that I had that wonderful escape in falling through a mill-race whilst the mill was going, and of being taken up unhurt; the story is incredible, but known for truth in all that part of Ireland, where hundreds of the common people flocked to see me. From hence we followed the regiment to Dublin, where we lay in the barracks a year. In this year (one thousand seven hundred and twenty-one) I learnt to write, &c. The regiment ordered in twenty-two to Carrick-fergus, in the north of Ireland. We all decamped; but got no further than Drogheda;—thence ordered to Mullingar, forty miles west, where, by Providence, we stumbled upon a kind relation, a collateral descendant from Archbishop Sterne, who took us all to his castle, and kindly entertained us for a year, and sent us to the regiment to Carrickfergus, loaded with kindnesses, &c. A most rueful and tedious journey had we all (in March) to Carrickfergus, where we arrived in six or seven days.—Little Devijeher here died; he was three years old; he had been left behind at nurse at a farmhouse near Wicklow, but was fetched to us by my father the summer after:—another child sent to fill his place, Susan. This babe, too, left us behind in this weary journey. The autumn of that year, or the spring afterwards (I forget which) my father got leave of his colonel to fix me at school,—which he did near Halifax, with an able master; with whom I stayed some time, till, by God's care of me, my Cousin Sterne, of Elvington, became a father to me, and sent me to the university, &c., &c. To pursue the thread of our story, my father's regiment was, the year after, ordered to Londonderry, where another sister was brought forth, Catherine, still living; but most unhappily estranged from me by my uncle's wickedness and her own folly. From this station the regiment was sent to defend Gibraltar, at the siege, where my father was run through the body by Captain Phillips, in a duel (the quarrel began about a goose!); with much difficulty he survived, though with an impaired constitution, which was not able to withstand the hardships it was put to; for he was sent to Jamaica, where he soon fell by the country fever, which took away his senses first, and made a child of him; and then, in a month or two, walking about continually without complaining, till the moment he sat down in an armchair, and breathed his last, which was at Port Antonio, on the north of the

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* This village, or rather hamlet, is within a few miles of the romantic lake called Glandelow, on which are to be seen the singularly interesting ecclesiastical antiquities, called the Seven Churches. The mill where Sterne encountered this remarkable risk long existed; and his escape still lives in village tradition.

island. My father was a little smart man, active to the last degree in all exercises, most patient of fatigue and disappointments, of which it pleased God to give him full measure. He was, in his temper, somewhat rapid and hasty, but of a kindly sweet disposition, void of all design; and so innocent in his own intentions, that he suspected no one; so that you might have cheated him ten times in a day, if nine had not been sufficient for your purpose. My poor father died in March 1731. I remained at Halifax till about the latter end of that year, and cannot omit mentioning this anecdote of myself and schoolmaster:—He had the ceiling of the schoolroom new white-washed; the ladder remained there. I, one unlucky day, mounted it, and wrote with a brush, in large capital letters, LAU. STERNE, for which the usher severely whipped me. My master was very much hurt at this, and said, before me, that never should that name be effaced, for I was a boy of genius, and he was sure I should come to preferment. This expression made me forget the stripes I had received. In the year thirty-two* my cousin sent me to the university, where I stayed some time. 'Twas there that I commenced a friendship with Mr. H——, which has been lasting on both sides. I then came to York, and my uncle got me the living of Sutton; and at York I became acquainted with your mother, and courted her for two years:—she owned she liked me, but thought herself not rich enough, or me too poor, to be joined together. She went to her sister's in S——; and I wrote to her often. I believe then she was partly determined to have me, but would not say so. At her return she fell into a consumption;—and one evening that I was sitting by her, with an almost broken heart to see her so ill, she said, 'My dear Laurey, I never can be yours, for I verily believe I have not long to live! but I have left you every shilling of my fortune.' Upon that she showed me her will. This generosity overpowered me. It pleased God that she recovered, and I married her in the year 1741. My uncle† and myself were then upon very good terms; for he soon got me the Prebendary of York;—but he quarrelled with me afterwards, because I would not write paragraphs in the newspapers;—though he was a party man, I was not, and detested such dirty work, thinking it beneath me. From that period he became my litterest enemy.‡ By my wife's means I got the living of Stillington; a friend of hers in the south had promised her that, if she married a clergyman in Yorkshire, when the living became vacant he would make her a

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* He was admitted of Jesus College, in the University of Cambridge, 6th July, 1733, under the tuition of Mr. Cannon.

Matriculated 29th March, 1735.

Admitted to the degree of B.A. in January, 1736.

Admitted M.A. at the commencement of 1740.

† Jaques Sterne, LL.D. He was prebendary of Durham, Canon Residentiary, Precentor, and Prebendary of York, Rector of Rise, and Rector of Hornsey-cum-Riston, both in the East Riding of the county of York. He died June 9th, 1759.

‡ It has, however, been insinuated, that he for some time wrote a periodical electioneering paper at York, in defence of the Whig interest.

compliment of it. I remained near twenty years at Sutton, doing duty at both places. I had then very good health. Books, painting, fiddling, and shooting, were my amusements. As to the Squire of the parish, I cannot say we were on a very friendly footing; but at Stillington, the family of the C——s showed us every kindness: 'twas most truly agreeable to be within a mile and a half of an amiable family, who were ever cordial friends. In the year 1760, I took a house at York for your mother and yourself, and went up to London to publish* my two first volumes of Shandy.† In that year Lord Falconbridge presented me with the curacy of Coxwould: a sweet retirement in comparison of Sutton. In sixty-two I went to France before the peace was concluded; and you both followed me. I left you both in France, and in two years after, I went to Italy for the recovery of my health; and, when I called upon you, I tried to engage your mother to return to England with me:‡ she and yourself are at length come, and I have had the inexpressible joy of seeing my girl everything I wished for.

"*I have set down these particulars relating to my family and self for my Lydia, in case hereafter she might have a curiosity, or a kinder motive, to know them.*"

To these notices, the following brief account of his death has been added by another writer:—

"As Mr. Sterne, in the foregoing, hath brought down the account of himself until within a few months of his death, it remains only to mention, that he left York about the end of the year 1767, and came to London, in order to publish 'The Sentimental Journey,' which he had written during the preceding summer at his favourite living of Coxwould. His health had been for some time declining; but he continued to visit his friends, and retained his usual flow of spirits. In

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* The first edition was printed in the preceding year at York.

† The following is the order in which Mr. Sterne's publications appeared:—

1747. The Case of Elijah and the Widow of Zarephath considered. A Charity Sermon preached on Good Friday, April 17, 1747, for the support of two charity schools in York.

1750. The Abuses of Conscience. Set forth in a sermon preached in the cathedral church of St. Peter, York, at the Summer Assizes, before the Hon. Mr. Baron Clive and the Hon. Mr. Baron Smythe, on Sunday, July 29, 1750.

1759. Vol. 1 and 2 of Tristram Shandy.

1760. Vol. 1 and 2 of Sermons.

1761. Vol. 3 and 4 of Tristram Shandy.

1762. Vol. 5 and 6 of Tristram Shandy.

1765. Vol. 7 and 8 of Tristram Shandy.

1766. Vols. 3, 4, and 5, and 6 of Sermons.

1767. Vol. 9 of Tristram Shandy.

1768. The Sentimental Journey.

The remainder of his works were published after his death.

‡ From this passage, it appears that the present account of Mr. Sterne's Life and Family were written about six months only before his death.

February, 1768, he began to perceive the approaches of death; and with the concern of a good man, and the solicitude of an affectionate parent, devoted his attention to the future welfare of his daughter. His letters, at this period, reflect so much credit on his character, that it is to be lamented some others in the collection were permitted to see the light. After a short struggle with his disorder, his debilitated and worn-out frame submitted to fate on the 18th day of March, 1768, at his lodgings in Bond Street. He was buried at the new burying-ground belonging to the parish of St. George, Hanover Square, on the 22nd of the same month, in the most private manner; and hath since been indebted to strangers for a monument very unworthy of his memory; on which the following lines are inscribed:—

Near to this Place
Lies the Body of
The Reverend LAURENCE STERNE, A.M.
Died September 13, 1768,*
Aged 53 Years."

To these Memoirs we can only add a few circumstances. The Archbishop of York, referred to as great-grandfather of the author, was Dr. Richard Sterne, who died in June, 1683. The family came from Suffolk to Nottinghamshire, and are described by Guillam as bearing Or a cheveron, between three crosses flory sable. The crest is that Starling proper, which might incur the censure of a zealous herald. It is a pun upon *Estourneau*, the French for a starling, as approaching to the proper name Sterne. This may be termed *canting*, in the armorial language, but the pen of Yorick has rendered it immortal.

Sterne was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, and took the degree of Master of Arts there in 1740. His protector and patron, in the outset of life, was his uncle Dr. Jaques Sterne, who was Prebendary of Durham, Canon Residentiary, Precentor, and Prebendary of York, with other good preferments. Dr. Sterne was a keen Whig, and zealous supporter of the Hanoverian succession. The politics of the times being extremely violent, he was engaged in many controversies, particularly with Dr. Richard Burton, a surgeon and man-midwife, whom he had arrested upon a charge of high treason, during the affair of 1745. Laurence Sterne, in the Memoir which precedes these notices, represents himself as having quarrelled with his uncle, because he would not assist him with his pen in controversies of this description; yet there is reason to believe he adopted his kinsman's enmities in some degree, since he consigned Dr. Burton to painful immortality, under the name of Dr. Slop.

When settled in Yorkshire, Sterne has represented his time as much engaged with books, music, and painting. The former seems to have

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* It is scarcely necessary to observe, that this date is erroneous.

been in a great measure supplied by the library of Skelton Castle, the abode of his intimate friend and relation, John Hall Stevenson, author of the witty and indecent collection, entitled "Crazy Tales," where there is a very humorous description of his ancient residence, under the name of Crazy Castle. This library had the same cast of antiquity which belonged to the Castle itself, and doubtless contained much of that rubbish of ancient literature, in which the labour and ingenuity of Sterne contrived to find a mine. Until 1759, Sterne had only printed two sermons; but in that year he surprised the world by publishing the two first volumes of "Tristram Shandy." Sterne states himself, in a letter to a friend, as being "tired of employing his brains for other people's advantage—a foolish sacrifice I have made for some years to an ungrateful person." This passage probably alludes to his quarrel with his uncle; and as he mentions having taken a small house in York for the education of his daughter, it is probable that he looked to his pen for some assistance, though, in a letter to a nameless doctor, who had accused him of writing in order to have *nummum in loculo*, he declares he wrote, not to be fed, but to be famous. "Tristram," however, procured the author both fame and profit. The brilliant genius, which mingled with so much real or affected eccentricity, the gaping astonishment of the readers who could not conceive the drift or object of the publication, with the ingenuity of those who attempted to discover the meaning of passages which really had none, gave the book a most extraordinary degree of éclat. But the applause of the public was not unmingled with censure. Sterne was not on good terms with his professional brethren: he had too much wit, and too little forbearance in the use of it; too much vivacity, and too little respect for his cloth and character, to maintain the formalities, or even the decencies, of the clerical station: and, moreover, he had, in the full career of his humour, assigned to some of his grave compeers ridiculous epithets and characters, which they did not resent the less, that they were certainly witty, and probably applicable. Indeed, to require a person to pardon an insult on account of the wit which accompanies the infliction, although it is what jesters often seem to expect, is as reasonable as to desire a wounded man to admire the painted feathers which wing the dart by which he is pierced. The tumult was loud on all sides; but amid shouts of applause and cries of censure, the notoriety of "Tristram" spread still wider and wider, and the fame of Sterne rose in proportion. The author therefore triumphed, and bid the critics defiance. "I shall be attacked and pelted," he says, in one of his letters, "either from cellar or garret, write what I will: and besides, must expect to have a party against me of many hundreds, who either do not, or will not, laugh—'tis enough that I divide the world—at least I will rest contented with it." On another occasion he says, "If my enemies knew that, by this rage of abuse and ill-will, they were effectually serving the interests both of myself and works, they would be more quiet; but it has been the fate of my betters, who have found that the way to fame is like

the way to heaven, through much tribulation; and till I shall have the honour to be as much maltreated as Rabelais and Swift were, I must continue humble, for I have not filled up the measure of half their persecutions."

The author went to London to enjoy his fame, and met with all that attention which the public gives to men of notoriety. He boasts of being engaged fourteen dinners deep, and received this hospitality as a tribute; while his contemporaries saw the festivity in a very different light. "Any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing," said Johnson, "will be very generally invited in London. The *man Sterne*, I am told, has had engagements for three months." Johnson's feelings of morality and respect for the priesthood led him to speak of Sterne with contempt; but when Goldsmith added, "And a very dull fellow," he replied with his emphatic, "Why, no, sir."

The two first volumes of "Tristram" proved introductors—singular in their character certainly—to two volumes of sermons, which the simple name of the Rev. Laurence Sterne (ere yet he became known as the author of this wild and capricious offspring of fancy), would never have recommended to notice, but which were sought for and read eagerly under that of Yorick. They maintained the character of the author for wit, genius, and eccentricity.

The third and fourth volumes of "Tristram" appeared in 1761, and the fifth and sixth in 1762. Both these publications were as popular as the two first volumes. The seventh and eighth, which came forth in 1765, did not attract so much attention. The novelty was in a great measure over; and although they contain some of the most beautiful passages which ever fell from the author's pen, yet neither Uncle Toby nor his faithful attendant were sufficient to attract the public favour in the same degree as before. Thus the popularity of this singular work was for a time impeded by that peculiar and affected style, which had at first attracted by its novelty, but which ceased to please when it was no longer new. Four additional volumes of sermons appeared in 1766; and in 1767 the ninth and last volume of "Tristram Shandy." "I shall publish," he says, "but one this year; and the next I shall begin a new work of four volumes, which when finished, I shall continue 'Tristram' with fresh spirit."

The new work was unquestionably his "Sentimental Journey;" for which, according to the evidence of La Fleur, Sterne had made much larger collections than were ever destined to see the light. The author's health was now become extremely feeble; and his Italian travels were designed, if possible, to relieve his consumptive complaints. The remedy proved unsuccessful; yet he lived to arrive in England, and to prepare for the press the first part of the "Sentimental Journey," which was published in 1768.

In this place we may insert with propriety those notices of Sterne and his valet La Fleur, which appear in Mr. Davis's interesting selection of anecdotes, which he has entitled an "Olio."

"La Fleur was born in Burgundy. When a mere child he conceived

a strong passion to see the world, and at eight years of age ran away from his parents. His prevenancy was always his passport, and his wants were easily supplied—milk, bread, and a straw-bed amongst the peasantry, were all he wanted for the night, and in the morning he wished to be on his way again. This rambling life he continued till he attained his tenth year, when being one day on the Pont Neuf at Paris, surveying with wonder the objects that surrounded him, he was accosted by a drummer, who easily enlisted him in the service. For six years La Fleur beat his drum in the French army; two years more would have entitled him to his discharge, but he preferred anticipation, and, exchanging dress with a peasant, easily made his escape. By having recourse to his old expedients, he made his way to Montreuil, where he introduced himself to Varenne, who fortunately took a fancy to him. The little accommodations he needed were given him with cheerfulness; and as what we sow we wish to see flourish, this worthy landlord promised to get him a master; and as he deemed the best not better than La Fleur merited, he promised to recommend him to *un Milord Anglois*. He fortunately could perform as well as promise, and he introduced him to Sterne, ragged as a colt, but full of health and hilarity. The little picture which Sterne has drawn of La Fleur's amours is so far true—He was fond of a very pretty girl at Montreuil, the elder of two sisters, who, if living, he said, resembled the Maria of Moulines: her he afterwards married, and, whatever proof it might be of his affection, was none of his prudence, for it made him not a jot richer or happier than he was before. She was a mantua-maker, and her closest application could produce no more than six sous a day; finding that her assistance could go little towards their support, and after having had a daughter by her, they separated, and he went to service. At length, with what money he had got together by his servitude, he returned to his wife, and they took a public-house in Royal-street, Calais.—There ill luck attended him,—war broke out; and the loss of the English sailors, who navigated the packets, and who were his principal customers, so reduced his little business, that he was obliged again to quit his wife, and confide to her guidance the little trade which was insufficient to support them both. He returned in March, 1783, but his wife had fled. A strolling company of comedians passing through the town, had seduced her from her home, and no tale or tidings of her have ever since reached him. From the period he lost his wife, says our informant, he has frequently visited England, to whose natives he is extremely partial, sometimes as a sergeant, at others as an express. Where zeal and diligence were required, La Fleur was never yet wanting."

In addition to La Fleur's account of himself, (continues Mr. Davis,) the writer of the preceding obtained from him several little circumstances relative to his master, as well as the characters depicted by him, a few of which, as they would lose by abridgment, I shall give *verbatim*.

"There were moments," said La Fleur, "in which my master appeared sunk into the deepest dejection—when his calls upon me for my services were so seldom, that I sometimes apprehensively pressed in upon his privacy, to suggest what I thought might divert his melancholy. He used to smile at my well-meant zeal, and I could see was happy to be relieved. At others, he seemed to have received a new soul—he launched into the levity natural *à mon pays*," said La Fleur, "and cried gaily enough, '*Vive la bagatelle!*' It was in one of these moments that he became acquainted with the grisette of the glove shop—she afterwards visited him at his lodgings, upon which La Fleur made not a single remark; but on naming the *fille de chambre*, his other visitant, he exclaimed, 'It was certainly a pity—she was so pretty and *petite*.'"

The lady mentioned under the initial L., was the Marquise Lamberti; to the interest of this lady he was indebted for the passport, the want of which began to make him seriously uneasy. Count de B. (Breteuil), notwithstanding the Shakspeare, La Fleur thinks, would have troubled himself little about him. Choiseul was minister at the time.

"*Poor Maria*

Was, alas! no fiction.—When we came up to her," said La Fleur, "she was grovelling in the road like an infant, and throwing the dust upon her head—and yet few were more lovely. Upon Sterne's accosting her with tenderness, and raising her in his arms, she collected herself, and resumed some composure—told him her tale of misery, and wept upon his breast—my master sobbed aloud. I saw her gently disengage herself from his arms, and she sung him the service to the Virgin; my poor master covered his face with his hands, and walked by her side to the cottage where she lived: there he talked earnestly to the old woman."

"Every day," said La Fleur, "while we stayed there, I carried them meat and drink from the hotel, and when we departed from Moulines, my master left his blessings and some money with the mother.—How much," added he, "I know not—he always gave more than he could afford."

Sterne was frequently at a loss upon his travels for ready money. Remittances were become interrupted by war, and he had wrongly estimated his expenses; he had reckoned along the post-roads, without adverting to the wretchedness that was to call upon him in his way.

"At many of our stages my master has turned to me with tears in his eyes—'These poor people oppress me, La Fleur; how shall I relieve me?' He wrote much, and to a late hour." I told La Fleur the inconsiderable quantity he had published; he expressed extreme surprise. "I know," said he, "upon our return from this tour, there was a large trunk completely filled with papers."—"Do you know anything of their tendency, La Fleur?"—"Yes; they were miscellaneous remarks upon the manners of the different nations he visited; and in Italy he was deeply engaged in making the most elaborate in-

quiries into the differing governments of the towns, and the characteristic peculiarities of the Italians of the various states."

To effect this, he read much--for the collections of the Patrons of Literature were open to him; he observed more. Singular as it may seem, Sterne endeavoured in vain to speak Italian. His valet acquired it on their journey; but his master, though he applied now and then, gave it up at length as unattainable.—"I the more wondered at this," said La Fleur, "as he must have understood Latin."

The assertion, sanctioned by Johnson, that Sterne was licentious and dissolute in conversation, stands thus far contradicted by the testimony of La Fleur: "His conversation with women," he said, "was of the most interesting kind; he usually left them serious, if he did not find them so."

The Dead Ass

Was no invention. The mourner was as simple and affecting as Sterne has related. La Fleur recollected the circumstance perfectly.

To Monks

Sterne never exhibited any particular sympathy. La Fleur remembered several pressing in upon him, to all of whom his answer was the same—*Mon père, je suis occupé. Je suis pauvre comme vous.*

In February, 1768, Laurence Sterne, his frame exhausted by long debilitating illness, expired at his lodgings in Bond Street, London. There was something in the manner of his death singularly resembling the particulars detailed by Mrs. Quickly, as attending that of Falstaff, the compeer of Yorick for infinite jest, however unlike in other particulars. While life was ebbing fast, and the patient lay on his bed totally exhausted, he complained that his feet were cold, and requested the female attendant to chafe them. She did so, and it seemed to relieve him. He complained that the cold came up higher; and whilst the assistant was in the act of rubbing his ancles and legs, he expired without a groan. It was also remarkable that his death took place much in the manner which he himself had wished; and that the last offices were rendered him, not in his own house, or by the hand of kindred affection, but in an inn, and by strangers.

We are well acquainted with Sterne's features and personal appearance, to which he himself frequently alludes. He was tall and thin, with a hectic and consumptive appearance. His features, though capable of expressing with peculiar effect the sentimental emotions by which he was often affected, had also a shrewd, humorous, and sarcastic character, proper to the wit and the satirist, and not unlike that which predominates in the portraits of Voltaire. His conversation was animated, and witty; but Johnson complained that it was marked by licence, better suiting the company of the Lord of Crazy Castle, than of the great moralist. It has been said, and probably with truth, that his temper was variable and unequal, the natural

consequence of an irritable bodily frame, and continued bad health. But we will not readily believe that the parent of Uncle Toby could be a harsh, or habitually a bad-humoured man. Sterne's letters to his friends, and especially to his daughter, breathe all the fondness of affection; and his resources, such as they were, seem to have been always at the command of those whom he loved.

If we consider Sterne's reputation as chiefly founded on "Tristram Shandy," he must be regarded as liable to two severe charges:—those, namely, of indecency, and of affectation. Upon the first accusation Sterne was himself peculiarly sore, and used to justify the licentiousness of his humour by representing it as a mere breach of decorum, which had no perilous consequence to morals. The following anecdote we have from a sure source:—Soon after Tristram had appeared, Sterne asked a Yorkshire lady of fortune and condition whether she had read his book. "I have not, Mr. Sterne," was the answer; "and, to be plain with you, I am informed it is not proper for female perusal."—"My dear good lady," replied the author, "do not be gulled by such stories; the book is like your young heir there, (pointing to a child of three years old, who was rolling on the carpet in his white tunics,) he shows at times a good deal that is usually concealed, but it is all in perfect innocence!" This witty excuse may be so far admitted; for it cannot be said that the licentious humour of "Tristram Shandy" is of the kind which applies itself to the passions, or is calculated to corrupt society. But it is a sin against taste, if allowed to be harmless as to morals. A handful of mud is neither a firebrand nor a stone; but to fling it about in sport, argues coarseness of mind, and want of common manners.

Sterne, however, began and ended by braving the censure of the world in this particular. A remarkable passage in one of his letters shows how lightly he was sometimes disposed to treat the charge; and what is singular enough, his plan for turning it into ridicule seems to have been serious. "Crebillon (*le fils*) has made a convention with me, which, if he is not too lazy, will be no bad *persiflage*. As soon as I get to Toulouse, he has agreed to write me an expostulatory letter on the indecencies of T. Shandy—which is to be answered by recrimination upon the liberties in his own works. These are to be printed together—Crebillon against Sterne—Sterne against Crebillon—the copy to be sold, and the money equally divided: this is good Swiss policy."

In like manner, the greatest admirers of Sterne must own, that his style is affected, eminently, and in a degree which even his wit and pathos are inadequate to support. The style of Rabelais, which he assumed for his model, is to the highest excess rambling, excursive, and intermingled with the greatest absurdities. But Rabelais was in some measure compelled to adopt this harlequin's habit, in order that, like licensed jesters, he might, under the cover of his folly, have permission to vent his satire against Church and State. Sterne assumed

the manner of his master, only as a mode of attracting attention, and of making the public stare; and, therefore, his extravagances, like those of a feigned madman, are cold and forced, even in the midst of his most irregular flights. A man may, in the present day, be, with perfect impunity, as wise or as witty, nay as satirical, as he can, without assuming the cap and bells of the ancient jester as an apology; and that Sterne chose voluntarily to appear under such a disguise. must be set down as mere affectation, and ranked with his unmeaning tricks of black or marbled pages, employed merely *ad captandum vulgus*. All popularity thus founded, carries in it the seeds of decay; for eccentricity in composition, like fantastic modes of dress, however attractive when first introduced, is sure to be caricatured by stupid imitators, to become soon unfashionable, and of course to be neglected.

If we proceed to look more closely into the manner of composition which Sterne thought proper to adopt, we find a sure guide in the ingenious Dr. Ferriar of Manchester, who, with most singular patience, has traced our author through the hidden sources whence he borrowed most of his learning, and many of his more striking and peculiar expressions. Rabelais (much less read than spoken of), the lively but licentious miscellany called "Moyen de Parvenir," and D'Aubigne's "Baron de Fæneste," with many other forgotten authors of the sixteenth century, were successively laid under contribution. Burton's since celebrated work on Melancholy (which Dr. Ferriar's Essay instantly raised to double price in the book-market), afforded Sterne an endless mass of quotations, with which he unscrupulously garnished his pages, as if they had been collected in the course of his own extensive reading. The style of the same author, together with that of Bishop Hall, furnished the author of "Tristram" with many of those whimsical expressions, similes, and illustrations, which were long believed the genuine effusions of his own eccentric wit. For proofs of this sweeping charge we must refer the reader to Dr. Ferriar's well-known Essay and Illustrations, as he delicately terms them, of Sterne's Writings, in which it is clearly shown, that he, whose manner and style were so long thought original, was, in fact, the most unhesitating plagiarist who ever cribbed from his predecessors in order to garnish his own pages. It must be owned, at the same time, that Sterne selects the materials of his mosaic work with so much art, places them so well, and polishes them so highly, that in most cases we are disposed to pardon the want of originality, in consideration of the exquisite talent with which the borrowed materials are wrought up into the new form.

One of Sterne's most singular thefts, considering the tenor of the passage stolen, is his declamation against literary depredators of his own class: "Shall we," says Sterne, "for ever make new books, as apothecaries make new medicines, by pouring only out of one vessel into another? Are we for ever to be twisting and untwining the same rope—for ever in the same track? for ever at the same pace?" The words of Burton are, "As apothecaries, we make new

mixtures, every day pour out of one vessel into another; and as the Romans robbed all the cities in the world to set out their bad-sited Rome, we skim the cream of other men's wits, pick the choice flowers of their tilled gardens, to set out our own sterile plots. We weave the same web, still twist the same rope again and again." We cannot help wondering at the coolness with which Sterne could transfer to his own work so eloquent a tirade against the very arts which he was practising.

Much has been said about the right of an author to avail himself of his predecessors' labours; and, certainly, in a general sense, he that revives the wit and learning of a former age, and puts it into the form likely to captivate his own, confers a benefit on his contemporaries. But to plume himself with the very language and phrases of former writers, and to pass their wit and learning for his own, was the more unworthy in Sterne, as he had enough of original talent, had he chosen to exert it, to have dispensed with all such acts of literary petty larceny.

"Tristram Shandy" is no narrative, but a collection of scenes, dialogues, and portraits, humorous or affecting, intermixed with much wit, and with much learning, original or borrowed. It resembles the irregularities of a Gothic room, built by some fanciful collector, to contain the miscellaneous remnants of antiquity which his pains have accumulated, and bearing as little proportion in its parts, as there is connexion between the pieces of rusty armour with which it is decorated. Viewing it in this light, the principal figure is Mr. Shandy the elder, whose character is formed in many respects upon that of Martinus Scriblerus. The history of Martin was designed by the celebrated club of wits, by whom it was commenced, as a satire upon the ordinary pursuits of learning and science. Sterne, on the contrary, had no particular object of ridicule; his business was only to create a person, to whom he could attach the great quantity of extraordinary reading, and antiquated learning, which he had collected. He, therefore, supposed in Mr. Shandy a man of an active and metaphysical, but at the same time a whimsical cast of mind, whom too much and too miscellaneous learning had brought within a step or two of madness, and who acted in the ordinary affairs of life upon the absurd theories adopted by the pedants of past ages. He is most admirably contrasted with his wife, well described as a good lady of the true poco-curante school, who neither obstructed the progress of her husband's hobbyhorse, to use a phrase which Sterne has rendered classical, nor could be prevailed upon to spare him the least admiration for the grace and dexterity with which he managed it.

Yorick, the lively, witty, sensitive, and heedless Parson, is the well-known personification of Sterne himself, and undoubtedly, like every portrait drawn of himself by a master of the art, bore a strong resemblance to the original. Still, however, there are shades of simplicity thrown into the character of Yorick, which did not exist in

that of Sterne. We cannot believe, that the jests of the latter were so void of malice prepense, or that his satire flowed entirely out of honesty of mind and mere jocundity of humour. It must be owned, moreover, that Sterne was more likely to have stolen a passage out of Stevinus if he could have found one to his purpose, than to have left one of his manuscripts in the volume, with the careless indifference of Yorick. Still, however, we gladly recognise the general likeness between the author and the child of his fancy, and willingly pardon the pencil, which, in the delicate task of self-delineation, has softened some traits of his own features and improved others.

Uncle Toby, and his faithful Squire, the most delightful characters in the work, or perhaps in any other, are drawn with such a pleasing force and discrimination, that they more than entitle the author to a free pardon for his literary peculations, his indecorum, and his affectation; nay authorize him to leave the court of criticism not forgiven only, but applauded and rewarded, as one who has exalted and honoured humanity, and impressed upon his readers such a lively picture of kindness and benevolence, blended with courage, gallantry, and simplicity, that their hearts must be warmed whenever it is recalled to memory. Sterne, indeed, might boldly plead in his own behalf, that the passages which he borrowed from others were of little value, in comparison to those which are exclusively original; and that the former might have been written by many persons, while in his own proper line he stands alone and inimitable. Something of extravagance may, perhaps, attach to Uncle Toby's favourite amusements. Yet in England, where men think and act with little regard to ridicule or censure of their neighbours, there is no impossibility, perhaps no great improbability in supposing, that a humourist might employ such a mechanical aid as my Uncle's bowling-green, in order to encourage and assist his imagination, in the pleasing but delusive task of castle-building. Men have been called children of larger growth, and among the antic toys and devices with which they are amused, the device of my Uncle, with whose pleasures we are so much disposed to sympathize, does not seem so unnatural upon reflection as it may appear at first sight.

It is well known (through Dr. Ferriar's labours) that Dr. Slop, with all his obstetrical engines, may be identified with Dr. Burton of York, who published a treatise of Midwifery in 1751. This person, as we have elsewhere noticed, was on bad terms with Sterne's uncle; and though there had come strife and unkindness between the uncle and the nephew, yet the latter seems to have retained aversion against the enemy of the former. But Sterne, being no politician, had forgiven the Jacobite, and only persecutes the Doctor with his raillery, as a quack and a Catholic.

It is needless to dwell longer on a work so generally known. The style employed by Sterne is fancifully ornamented, but at the same time vigorous and masculine, and full of that animation and force which can only be derived by an intimate acquaintance with the early

English prose-writers. In the power of approaching and touching the finer feelings of the heart, he has never been excelled, if indeed he has ever been equalled; and may be at once recorded as one of the most affected, and one of the most simple of writers,—as one of the greatest plagiarists, and one of the most original geniuses, whom England has produced. Dr. Ferriar, who seemed born to trace and detect the various mazes through which Sterne carried on his depredations upon ancient and dusty authors, apologizes for the rigour of his inquest, by doing justice to those merits which were peculiarly our author's own. We cannot better close this article than with the sonnet in which his ingenious inquisitor makes the *amende honorable* to the shade of Yorick.

Sterne, for whose sake I plod through miry ways,
  Of antique wit and quibbling mazes drear,
  Let not thy shade malignant censure fear,
Though aught of borrowed mirth my search betrays.
Long slept that mirth in dust of ancient days,
  (Erewhile to Guise or wanton Valois dear;)
  Till waked by thee in Skelton's joyous pile,
She flung on Tristram her capricious rays;
  But the quick tear that checks our wondering smile,
In sudden pause or unexpected story,
  Owns thy true mastery—and Le Fevre's woes,
  Maria's wanderings, and the Prisoner's throes,
Fix thee conspicuous on the throne of glory.

HENRY MACKENZIE.

FOR the biographical part of the following Memoir, we are chiefly indebted to a short sketch of the life of our distinguished contemporary,* compiled from the most authentic sources, and prefixed to a beautiful duodecimo edition of "The Man of Feeling," printed at Paris a few years since. We have had the farther advantage of correcting and enlarging the statements which it contains, from undoubted authority.

Henry Mackenzie, Esq., was born at Edinburgh, in August, 1745, on the same day on which Prince Charles Stuart landed in Scotland. His father was Dr. Joshua Mackenzie, of that city; and his mother, Margaret, the eldest daughter of Mr. Rose of Kilravock, of a very ancient family in Nairnshire. After being educated at the High School and University of Edinburgh, Mr. Mackenzie, by the advice of some friends of his father, was articled to Mr. Inglis of Redhall, in order to acquire a knowledge of the business of the Exchequer, a law-department, in which he was likely to have fewer competitors than in any other in Scotland.

To this profession, although not perfectly compatible with that literary taste which he very early displayed, Mr. Mackenzie applied with due diligence; and, in 1765, went to London, to study the modes of English Exchequer practice, which, as well as the constitution of the court, are similar in both countries. While there, his talents induced a friend to solicit his remaining in London, and qualifying himself for the English bar. But the anxious wishes of his family that he should reside with them, and the moderation of an unambitious mind, decided his return to Edinburgh: and here he became, first, partner, and afterwards successor, to Mr. Inglis, in the office of the Attorney for the Crown.

His professional labours, however, did not prevent his attachment to literary pursuits. When in London, he sketched some part of his first, and very popular work, "The Man of Feeling," which was published in 1771, without his name; and was so much a favourite with the public, as to become, a few years after, the occasion of a remarkable literary fraud. A young clergyman, Mr. Eccles, of Bath, observ-

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* This memoir was written during the lifetime of Mackenzie.—[Edit.]

ing that his work was unaccompanied by an author's name, laid claim to it, transcribed the whole in his own hand, with blottings, interlineations, and corrections; and maintained his assumed right with such plausible pertinacity, that Messrs. Cadell and Strachan (Mr. Mackenzie's publishers) found it necessary to undeceive the public by a formal contradiction. This impostor was afterwards drowned while bathing in the river Avon.

In a few years after this, Mr. Mackenzie published his "Man of the World," which seems to be intended as a second part to "The Man of Feeling." It breathes the same tone of exquisite moral delicacy, and of refined sensibility. In his former fiction, he imagined a hero constantly obedient to every emotion of his moral sense; in "The Man of the World," he exhibited, on the contrary, a person rushing headlong into guilt and ruin, and spreading misery all around him, by pursuing a selfish and sensual happiness which he expected to obtain in defiance of the moral sense. His next production was "Julia de Roubigné," a novel in a series of letters. The fable is deeply interesting, and the letters are written with great elegance and propriety of style.

In 1776, Mr. Mackenzie was married to Miss Penuel Grant, daughter of Sir Ludovick Grant of Grant, Bart., and Lady Margaret Ogilvy, by whom he has a numerous family; the eldest of whom, Mr. Henry Joshua Mackenzie, has been called to the situation of a Judge of the Supreme Court of Session, with the unanimous approbation of his profession and his country.

In 1777, or 1778, a society of gentlemen, of Edinburgh, were accustomed at their meetings to read short essays of their composition, in the manner of the *Spectator* and Mr. Mackenzie being admitted a member, after hearing several of them read, suggested the advantage of giving greater variety to their compositions, by admitting some of a lighter kind, descriptive of common life and manners; and he exhibited some specimens of the kind in his own writing. From this arose the *Mirror*,* a well known periodical publication, to which Mr. Mackenzie performed the office of editor, and was also the principal contributor. The success of the *Mirror* naturally led Mr. Mackenzie and his friends to undertake the *Lounger*,† upon the same plan, which was not less read, admired, and generally circulated.

When the Royal Society of Edinburgh was instit uted, Mr. Mackenzie became one of its most active members, and he has occasionally enriched the volumes of its "Transactions" by his valuable communications; particularly by an elegant tribute to the memory of his friend, Judge Abercromby, and a memoir on German Tragedy. He is one of the original members of the Highland Society; and by him have been published the volumes of their "Transactions," to which

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* Begun the 23rd January, 1779; ended 27th May, 1780
† Begun 6th February, 1785; ended 6th January, 1787,

he has prefixed an account of the Institution and principal proceedings of the Society, and an interesting account of Gaelic poetry.

In the year 1792 he was one of those literary men who contributed some little occasional tracts to disabuse the lower orders of the people, led astray at that time by the prevailing frenzy of the French Revolution. In 1793, he wrote the "Life of Dr. Blacklock," at the request of his widow, prefixed to a quarto edition of the blind poet's works. His intimacy with Blacklock gave him an opportunity of knowing the habits of his life, the bent of his mind, and the feelings peculiar to the privation of sight, under which that amiable and interesting poet laboured.

The literary society of Edinburgh, in the latter part of last century, whose intimacy he enjoyed, is described in his "Life of John Home," which he read to the Royal Society in 1812, as a sort of Supplement to that Life; he then added some Critical Essays, chiefly on Dramatic Poetry, which have not been published. He has since contributed to the Society a curious Essay on Dreaming, which was heard with much interest.

In 1808, Mr. Mackenzie published a complete edition of his works, in eight volumes octavo; including a tragedy, "The Spanish Father," and a comedy, "The White Hypocrite," which last was once performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. The tragedy had never been represented, in consequence of Mr. Garrick's opinion, that the catastrophe was of too shocking a kind for the modern stage; though he owned the merit of the poetry, the force of some of the scenes, and the scope for fine action in the character of Alphonso, the leading person of the drama. In this edition also is given a carefully corrected copy of the tragedy of "The Prince of Tunis," which had been represented at Edinburgh in 1763 with great success.

Among the prose compositions of Mr. Mackenzie, is a political tract, "An Account of the Proceedings of the Parliament of 1784," which he was induced to write at the persuasion of his old and steady friend, Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville. It introduced him to the countenance and regard of Mr. Pitt, who revised the work with particular care and attention, and made several corrections in it with his own hand. Some years after, Mr. Mackenzie was appointed, on the recommendation of Lord Melville and the Right Hon. George Rose, also his particular friend, to the office of Comptroller of the Taxes for Scotland, an appointment of very considerable labour and responsibility, and in discharging which this fanciful and ingenious author has shown his power of entering into and discussing the most dry and complicated details, when such labour became a matter of duty.

The time, we hope, is yet distant, when, speaking of this author as of those with whom his genius ranks him, a biographer may with delicacy trace his personal character and peculiarities, or record the

manner in which he has discharged the duties of a citizen. When that hour shall arrive, we trust few of his own contemporaries will be left to mourn him; but we can anticipate the sorrow of a later generation, when deprived of the wit which enlivened their hours of enjoyment, the benevolence which directed and encouraged their studies, and the wisdom which instructed them in their duties to society. It is enough to say here, that Mr. Mackenzie survives, venerable and venerated, as the last link of the chain which connects the Scottish literature of the present age with the period when there were giants in the land—the days of Robertson, and Hume, and Smith, and Home, and Clerk, and Fergusson; and that the remembrance of an era so interesting could not have been intrusted to a sounder judgment, a more correct taste, or a more tenacious memory. It is much to be wished, that Mr. Mackenzie, taking a wider view of his earlier years than in the "Life of Home," would place on a more permanent record some of the anecdotes and recollections with which he delights society. We are about to measure his capacity for the task by a singular standard, but it belongs to Mr. Mackenzie's character. He has, we believe, shot game of every description which Scotland contains (deer, and probably grouse, excepted), on the very grounds at present occupied by the extensive and splendid streets of the New Town of Edinburgh; has sought for hares and wild ducks, where there are now palaces, churches, and assembly rooms; and has witnessed moral revolutions as surprising as this extraordinary change of local circumstances. These mutations in manners and in morals have been gradual indeed in their progress, but most important in their results, and they have been introduced into Scotland within the last half century. Every sketch of them, or of the circumstances by which they were produced, from the pen of so intelligent an observer, and whose opportunities of observation have been so extensive, would, however slight and detached, rival in utility and amusement any work of the present time.

As an author, Mr. Mackenzie has shown talents both for poetry and the drama. Indeed we are of opinion, that no man can succeed perfectly in the line of fictitious composition, without most of the properties of a poet, though he may be no writer of verses; but Mr. Mackenzie possesses the powers of melody in addition to those of poetical conception. He has given a beautiful specimen of legendary poetry, in two little Highland ballads, a style of composition which becomes fashionable from time to time, on account of its simplicity and pathos, and then is again laid aside, when worn out by the common-place productions of mere imitators, to whom its approved facility offers its chief recommendation. But it is as a Novelist that we are now called on to consider our author's powers; and the universal and permanent popularity of his writings entitles us to rank him amongst the most distinguished of his class. His works possess the rare and invaluable property of originality, to which all other qualities are as dust in the balance; and the sources to which he resorts to excite our interest, are rendered accessible by a path peculiarly his

own. The reader's attention is not riveted, as in Fielding's works, by strongly marked character, and the lucid evolution of a well-constructed fable; or as in Smollett's novels, by broad and strong humour, and a decisively superior knowledge of human life in all its varieties; nor, to mention authors whom Mackenzie more nearly resembles, does he attain the pathetic effect which is the object of all three, in the same manner as Richardson, or as Sterne. An accumulation of circumstances, sometimes amounting to tediousness, a combination of minutely traced events, with an ample commentary on each, were thought necessary by Richardson to excite and prepare the mind of the reader for the affecting scenes which he has occasionally touched with such force; and without denying him his due merit, it must be allowed that he has employed preparatory volumes in accomplishing what has cost Mackenzie and Sterne only a few pages, perhaps only a few sentences.

On the other hand, although the two last authors have, in particular passages, a more strong resemblance to each other than those formerly named, yet there remain such essential points of difference betwix' them, as must secure for Mackenzie the praise of originality, which we have claimed for him. It is needless to point out to the reader the difference between the general character of their writings, or how far the chaste, correct, almost studiously decorous manner and style of the works of the author of "The Man of Feeling," differ from the wild wit, and intrepid contempt at once of decency, and regularity of composition, which distinguish "Tristram Shandy." It is not in the general conduct or style of their works that they in the slightest degree approach; nay, no two authors in the British language can be more distinct. But even in the particular passages where both had in view to excite the reader's pathetic sympathy, the modes resorted to are different. The pathos of Sterne in some degree resembles his humour, and is seldom attained by simple means; a wild, fanciful, beautiful flight of thought and expression is remarkable in the former, as an extravagant, burlesque, and ludicrous strain of conception and language characterises the latter. The celebrated passage, where the tear of the recording Angel blots the profane oath of Uncle Toby out of the register of heaven, a flight so poetically fanciful as to be stretched to the very verge of extravagance, will illustrate our position. To attain his object—that is, to make us thoroughly sympathize with the excited state of mind which betrays Uncle Toby into the indecorous assertion which forms the groundwork of the whole—the author calls Heaven and Hell into the lists, and represents in a fine poetic frenzy, its effects on the accusing Spirit and registering Angel. Let this be contrasted with the fine tale of "La Roche," in which Mackenzie has described, with such unexampled delicacy, and powerful effect, the sublime scene of the sorrows and resignation of the bereaved father. This also is painted reflectively; that is, the reader's sympathy is excited by the effect produced on one of the drama, neither angel nor devil, but a philosopher, whose heart remains sensitive, though his studies have

misled his mind into the frozen regions of scepticism. To say nothing of the tendency of the two passages, which will scarce, in the minds of the most unthinking, bear any comparison, we would only remark, that Mackenzie has given us a moral truth, Sterne a beautiful trope; and that if the one claims the palm of superior brilliancy of imagination, that due to nature and accuracy of human feeling must abide with the Scottish author.

Yet while marking the broad and distinct difference between these two authors, the most celebrated certainly among those who are termed sentimental, it is but fair to Sterne to add, that although Mackenzie has rejected his licence of wit, and flights of imagination, retrenched, in a great measure, his episodical digressions, and altogether banished the indecency and buffoonery to which he had too frequent recourse, still their volumes must be accounted as belonging to the same class; and amongst the thousand imitators who have pursued their path, we cannot recollect one English author who is entitled to the same honour. The foreign authors, Riccoboni and Marivaux, belong to the same department; but of the former we remember little; and the latter, though full of the most delicate touches, often depends for effect on the turn of phrase, and the protracted embarrassments of artificial gallantry, more than upon the truth and simplicity of nature. The "Heloise" and "Emile" partake of the insanity of their author, and are exaggerated, though most eloquent, descriptions of overwhelming passion, rather than works of sentiment.

In future compositions, the author dropped even that resemblance which the style of "The Man of Feeling" bears, in some particulars, to the works of Sterne; and his country may boast, that, in one instance at least, she has produced, in Mackenzie, a writer of pure musical Addisonian prose, which retains the quality of vigour, without forfeiting that of clearness and simplicity.

We are hence led to observe, that the principal object of Mackenzie, in all his novels, has been to reach and sustain a tone of moral pathos, by representing the effect of incidents, whether important or trifling, upon the human mind, and especially on those which were not only just, honourable, and intelligent, but so framed as to be responsive to those finer feelings to which ordinary hearts are callous. This is the direct and professed object of Mackenzie's first work, which is in fact no narrative, but a series of successive incidents, each rendered interesting by the mode in which they operate on the feelings of Harley. The attempt had been perilous in a meaner hand; for, sketched by a pencil less nicely discriminating, Harley, instead of a being whom we love, respect, sympathize with, and admire, had become the mere Quixote of sentiment, an object of pity perhaps, but of ridicule at the same time. Against this the author has guarded with great skill; and while duped and swindled in London, Harley neither loses our consideration as a man of sense and spirit, nor is subjected to that degree of contempt with which readers in general regard the misadventures of a novice upon town, whilst they hug themselves in

their own superior knowledge of the world. Harley's spirited conduct towards an impertinent passenger in the stage-coach, and his start of animated indignation on listening to Edward's story, are skilfully thrown in, to satisfy the reader that his softness and gentleness of temper were not allied to effeminacy; and that he dared, on suitable occasions, to do all that might become a man. We have heard that some of Harley's feelings were taken from those of the author himself, when, at his first entrance on the dry and barbarous study of the municipal law, he was looking back, like Blackstone, on the land of the Muses, which he was condemned to leave behind him. It has also been said, that the fine sketch of Miss Walton was taken from the heiress of a family of distinction, who ranked at that time high in the Scottish fashionable world. But such surmises are little worth the tracing; for we believe no original character was ever composed by any author, without the idea having been previously suggested by something which he had observed in nature.

The other novels of Mr. Mackenzie, although assuming a more regular and narrative form, are, like "The Man of Feeling," rather the history of effects produced on the human mind by a series of events, than the narrative of those events themselves. The villany of Sindall is the tale of a heart hardened to selfishness, by incessant and unlimited gratification of the external senses; a contrast to that of Harley, whose mental feelings have acquired such an ascendency as to render him unfit for the ordinary business of life. The picture of the former is so horrid, that we would be disposed to deny its truth, did we not unhappily know, that sensual indulgence, in the words of Burns,

> hardens a' within,
> And petrifies the feeling;

and that there never did and never will exist, anything permanently noble and excellent in a character, which was a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial. The account of the victims of Sindall's arts and crimes, particularly the early history of the Annesleys, is exquisitely well drawn; and, perhaps, the scene between the brother and sister by the pond, equals any part of the author's writings. Should the reader doubt this, he may easily make the experiment, by putting it into the hands of any young person of feeling and intelligence, and of an age so early as not to have forgotten the sports and passions of childhood.

The beautiful and tragic tale of "Julia de Roubigné," is of a very different tenor from "The Man of the World;" and we have good authority for thinking, that it was written in some degree as a counterpart to the latter work. A friend of the author, the celebrated Lord Kaimes, we believe, had represented to Mr. Mackenzie, in how many poems, plays, and novels, the distress of the piece is made to turn upon the designing villany of some one of the *dramatis personæ*. On considering his observations, the author undertook, as a task fit for his

genius, the composition of a story, in which the characters should be all naturally virtuous, and where the calamities of the catastrophe should arise, as frequently happens in actual life, not out of schemes of premeditated villany, but from the excess and over-indulgence of passions and feelings, in themselves blameless, nay, praiseworthy, but which, encouraged to a morbid excess, and coming into fatal though fortuitous concourse with each other, lead to the most disastrous consequences. Mr. Mackenzie executed his purpose; and as the plan fell in most happily with the views of a writer, whose object was less to describe external objects, than to read a lesson on the human passions, he has produced one of the most heart-wringing histories that has ever been written. The very circumstances which palliate the errors of the sufferers, in whose distress we interest ourselves, point out to the reader that there is neither room for hope, remedy, nor revenge. When a Lovelace or a Sindall comes forth like an Evil Principle, the agent of all the misery of the scene, we see a chance of their artifices being detected, at least the victims have the consciousness of innocence, the reader the stern hope of vengeance. But when, as in "Julia de Roubigné," the revival of mutual affection on the part of two pure and amiable beings, imprudently and incautiously indulged, awakens, and not unjustly, the jealous honour of a high-spirited husband,—when we see Julia precipitated into misery by her preference of filial duty to early love,—Savillon, by his faithful and tender attachment to a deserving object,—and Montauban, by a jealous regard to his spotless fame,—we are made aware, at the same time, that there is no hope of aught but the most unhappy catastrophe. The side of each sufferer is pierced by the very staff on which he leant, and the natural and virtuous feelings which they at first most legitimately indulged, precipitate them into error, crimes, remorse, and misery. The cruelty to which Montauban is hurried, may, perhaps, be supposed to exempt him from our sympathy, especially in an age when such crimes as that of which Julia is suspected, are usually borne by the injured parties with more equanimity than her husband displays. But the irritable habits of the time, and of his Spanish descent, must plead the apology of Montauban, as they are admitted to form that of Othello. Perhaps, on the whole, "Julia de Roubigné" gives the reader too much actual pain to be so generally popular as "The Man of Feeling," since we have found its superiority to that beautiful essay on human sensibility, often disputed by those whose taste we are in general inclined to defer to. The very acute feelings which the work usually excites among the readers whose sympathies are liable to be awakened by scenes of fictitious distress, we are disposed to ascribe to the extreme accuracy and truth of the sentiments, as well as the beautiful manner in which they are expressed. There are few who have not, at one period of life, broken ties of love and friendship, secret disappointments of the heart, to mourn over; and we know no book which recalls the recollection of such more severely than "Julia de Roubigné."

We return to consider the key-note, as we may term it, on which

Mackenzie has formed his tales of fictitious woe, and which we have repeatedly described to be the illustration of the nicer and finer sensibilities of the human breast. To attain this point, and to place it in the strongest and most unbroken light, the author seems to have kept the other faculties with which we know him to be gifted, in careful subordination. The Northern Addison, who revived the art of periodical writing, and sketched, though with a light pencil, the follies and the lesser vices of his time, has showed himself a master of playful satire. The historian of the Homespun family may place his narrative, without fear of shame, by the side of "The Vicar of Wakefield." Colonel Caustic and Umfraville are masterly conceptions of the *laudator temporis acti;* and many personages in those papers which Mr. Mackenzie contributed to the *Mirror* and *Lounger* attest with what truth, spirit, and ease, he could describe, assume, and sustain, a variety of characters. The beautiful landscape-painting which he has exhibited in many passages (take, for example, that where the country-seat of the old Scottish lady and its accompaniments are so exquisitely delineated), assures us of the accuracy and delicacy of his touch in delineating the beauties of nature.

But all these powerful talents, any single one of which might have sufficed to bring men of more bounded powers into notice, have been by Mackenzie carefully subjected to the principal object which he proposed to himself—the delineation of the human heart. Variety of character he has introduced sparingly, and has seldom recourse to any peculiarity of incident, availing himself generally of those which may be considered as common property to all writers of romance. His sense of the beauties of nature, and power of describing them, are carefully kept down, to use the expression of the artists; and like the single straggling bough, which shades the face of his sleeping veteran, just introduced to relieve his principal object, but not to eclipse it. It cannot be termed an exception to this rule, though certainly a peculiarity of this author, that on all occasions where sylvan sports can be introduced, he displays an intimate familiarity with them, and, from personal habits, to which we have elsewhere alluded, shows a delight to dwell for an instant upon a favourite topic.

Lastly, The wit which sparkles in his periodical Essays, and in his private conversation, shows itself but little in his Novels; and although his peculiar vein of humour may be much more frequently traced, yet it is so softened down, and divested of the broad ludicrous, that it harmonizes with the most grave and affecting parts of the tale, and becomes, like the satire of Jacques, only a more humorous shade of melancholy. In short, Mackenzie aimed at being the historian of feeling, and has succeeded in the object of his ambition. But as mankind are never contented, and as critics are certainly no exception to a rule so general, we could wish that, without losing or altering a line our author has written, he had condescended to give us, in addition to his stores of sentiment,—a romance on life and manners, by which, we are

convinced, he would have twisted another branch of laurel into his garland. However, as Sebastian expresses it,

> What had been, is unknown; what is, appears.

We must be proudly satisfied with what we have received, and happy that, in this line of composition, we can boast a living author, of excellence like that of Henry Mackenzie.*

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* Henry Mackenzie died in 1831, at the advanced age of 86.—[EDIT.]

HORACE WALPOLE.

THE "Castle of Otranto" is remarkable, not only for the wild interest of the story, but as the first modern attempt to found a tale of amusing fiction upon the basis of the ancient romances of chivalry. The neglect and discredit of these venerable legends had commenced so early as the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when, as we learn from the criticism of the times, Spenser's fairy web was approved rather on account of the mystic and allegorical interpretation, than the plain and obvious meaning of his chivalrous pageant. The drama, which shortly afterwards rose into splendour, and English versions from the innumerable novelists of Italy, supplied to the higher class the amusement which their fathers received from the legends of "Don Belianis" and the "Mirror of Knighthood;" and the huge volumes, which were once the pastime of nobles and princes, shorn of their ornaments, and shrunk into abridgments, were banished to the kitchen or nursery, or, at best, to the hall-window of the old-fashioned country manor-house. Under Charles II., the prevailing taste for French literature dictated the introduction of those dullest of dull folios, the romances of Calprenede and Scuderi, works which hover between the ancient tale of chivalry and the modern novel. The alliance was so ill conceived, that these ponderous tomes retained all the insufferable length and breadth of the prose volumes of chivalry, the same detailed account of reiterated and unvaried combats, the same unnatural and extravagant turn of incident, without the rich and sublime strokes of genius, and vigour of imagination, which often distinguished the early romance; while they exhibited all the unnatural metaphysical jargon, sentimental languor, and flat love-intrigue of the novel, without being enlivened by its variety of character, just traits of feeling, or acute views of life. Such an ill-imagined species of composition retained its ground longer than might have been expected, only because these romances were called works of entertainment, and that there was nothing better to supply their room. Even in the days of the *Spectator*, Clelia, Cleopatra, and the Grand Cyrus, (as that precious folio is christened by its butcherly translator,) were the favourite closet companions of the fair sex. But this unnatural taste began to give way early in the eighteenth century; and, about the middle of it, was entirely superseded by the works of Le Sage, Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett; so that even the very name of romance, now so venerable in the ear of antiquaries

and book-collectors, was almost forgotten at the time "The Castle of Otranto" made its first appearance.

The peculiar situation of Horace Walpole, the ingenious author of this work, was such as gave him a decided predilection for what may be called the Gothic style, a term which he contributed not a little to rescue from the bad fame into which it had fallen, being currently used before his time to express whatever was in pointed and diametrical opposition to the rules of true taste.

Horace Walpole, it is needless to remind the reader, was the son of Sir Robert Walpole, that celebrated minister, who held the reins of government under two successive monarchs, with a grasp so firm and uncontrolled, that his power seemed entwined with the rights of the Brunswick family. Horace was born in the year 1716–17; was educated at Eton, and formed, at that celebrated seminary, a school-boy acquaintance with the celebrated Gray, which continued during the earlier part of their residence together at Cambridge, so that they became fellow-travellers by joint consent in 1739. They disagreed and parted on the continent; the youthful vivacity, and, perhaps, the aristocratic assumption of Walpole, not agreeing with the somewhat formal opinions and habits of the professed man of letters. In the reconciliation afterwards effected between them, Walpole frankly took on himself the blame of the rupture, and they continued friends until Gray's death.

When Walpole returned to England, he obtained a seat in Parliament, and entered public life as the son of a prime minister as powerful as England had known for more than a century. When the father occupied such a situation, his sons had necessarily their full share of that court which is usually paid to the near connexions of those who have the patronage of the State at their disposal. To the feeling of importance inseparable from the object of such attention, was added the early habit of connecting and associating the interest of Sir Robert Walpole, and even the domestic affairs of his family, with the parties in the Royal Family of England, and with the changes in the public affairs of Europe. It is not therefore wonderful, that the turn of Horace Walpole's mind, which was naturally tinged with the love of pedigree, and a value for family honours, should have been strengthened in that bias by circumstances, which seemed, as it were, to implicate the fate of his own house with that of princes, and to give the shields of the Walpoles, Shorters, and Robsarts, from whom he descended, an added dignity, unknown to their original owners. If Mr. Walpole ever founded hopes of raising himself to political eminence, and turning his family importance to advantage in his career, the termination of his father's power, and the personal change with which he felt it attended, disgusted him with active life, and early consigned him to literary retirement. He had, indeed, a seat in Parliament for many years; but, unless upon one occasion, when he vindicated the memory of his father with great dignity and eloquence, he took no share in the debates of the House, and not much interest in the par-

ties which maintained them. Indeed, in the account which he has himself rendered us of his own views and dispositions with respect to State affairs, he seems rather to have been bent on influencing party spirit, and bustling in public affairs, for the sake of embroilment and intrigue, than in order to carry any particular measure, whether important to himself, or of consequence to the State. In the year 1758, and at the active age of forty-one, secured from the caprices of fortune, he retired altogether from public life, to enjoy his own pursuits and studies in retirement. His father's care had invested him with three good sinecure offices, so that his income, managed with economy, which no one understood better how to practise, was sufficient for his expense in matters of *virtu*, as well as for maintaining his high rank in society.

The subjects of Horace Walpole's studies were, in a great measure, dictated by his habits of thinking and feeling operating upon an animated imagination, and a mind acute, active, penetrating, and fraught with a great variety of miscellaneous knowledge. Travelling had formed his taste for the fine arts; but his early predilection in favour of birth and rank connected even those branches of study with that of Gothic history and antiquities. His "Anecdotes of Painting and Engraving" evince many marks of his favourite pursuits; but his "Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors," and his "Historical Doubts," we owe entirely to his pursuits as an antiquary and genealogist. The former work evinces, in a particular degree, Mr. Walpole's respect for birth and rank; yet is, perhaps, ill calculated to gain much sympathy for either. It would be difficult, by any process or principle of subdivision, to select a list of as many plebeian authors, containing so very few whose genius was worthy of commemoration; but it was always Walpole's foible to disclaim a professed pursuit of public favour, for which, however, he earnestly thirsted, and to hold himself forth as a privileged author, "one of the right-hand file," who did not mean to descend into the common arena, where professional authors contend before the public eye, but wrote merely to gratify his own taste, by throwing away a few idle hours on literary composition. There was much affectation in this, which accordingly met the reward which affectation usually incurs; as Walpole seems to have suffered a good deal from the criticism which he affected to despise, and occasionally from the neglect which he appeared to court.

The "Historical Doubts" are an acute and curious example how minute antiquarian research may shake our faith in the facts most pointedly averred by general history. It is remarkable also to observe how, in defending a system which was probably at first adopted as a mere literary exercise, Mr. Walpole's doubts acquired, in his own eyes, the respectability of certainties, in which he could not brook controversy.

Mr. Walpole's domestic occupations, as well as his studies, bore evidence of a taste for English antiquities, which was then uncommon. He loved, as a satirist has expressed it, "to gaze on Gothic toys through

Gothic glass;" and the villa at Strawberry-Hill, which he chose for his abode, gradually swelled into a feudal castle, by the addition of turrets, towers, galleries, and corridors, whose fretted roofs, carved panels, and illuminated windows, were garnished with the appropriate furniture of scutcheons, armorial bearings, shields, tilting lances, and all the panoply of chivalry. The Gothic order of architecture is now so generally, and, indeed, indiscriminately used, that we are rather surprised if the country-house of a tradesman retired from business does not exhibit lanceolated windows, divided by stone shafts, and garnished by painted glass, a cupboard in the form of a cathedral-stall, and a pig-house with a front borrowed from the façade of an ancient chapel. But, in the middle of the eighteenth century, when Mr. Walpole began to exhibit specimens of the Gothic style, and to show how patterns, collected from cathedrals and monuments, might be applied to chimney-pieces, ceilings, windows, and balustrades, he did not comply with the dictates of a prevailing fashion, but pleased his own taste, and realized his own visions, in the romantic cast of the mansion which he erected.

Mr. Walpole's lighter studies were conducted upon the same principle which influenced his historical researches, and his taste in architecture. His extensive acquaintance with foreign literature, in which he justly prided himself, was subordinate to his pursuits as an English antiquary and genealogist, in which he gleaned subjects for poetry and for romantic fiction, as well as for historical controversy. These are studies, indeed, proverbially dull; but it is only when they are pursued by those whose fancies nothing can enliven. A Horace Walpole, or a Thomas Wharton, is not a mere collector of dry and minute facts, which the general historian passes over with disdain. He brings with him the torch of genius, to illuminate the ruins through which he loves to wander; nor does the classic scholar derive more inspiration from the pages of Virgil, than such an antiquary from the glowing, rich, and powerful feudal painting of Froissart. His mind being thus stored with information, accumulated by researches into the antiquities of the Middle Ages, and inspired, as he himself informs us, by the romantic cast of his own habitation, Mr. Walpole resolved to give the public a specimen of the Gothic style adapted to modern literature, as he had already exhibited its application to modern architecture.

As, in his model of a Gothic modern mansion, our author had studiously endeavoured to fit to the purposes of modern convenience, or luxury, the rich, varied, and complicated tracing and carving of the ancient cathedral, so, in "The Castle of Otranto," it was his object to unite the marvellous turn of incident, and imposing tone of chivalry, exhibited in the ancient romance, with that accurate display of human character, and contrast of feelings and passions, which is, or ought to be, delineated in the modern novel. But Mr. Walpole, being uncertain of the reception which a work upon so new a plan might experience from the world, and not caring, perhaps, to encounter the ridicule which would have attended its failure, "The Castle of Otranto" was,

in 1764 ushered into the world, as a translation, by William Marshall, from the Italian of Onuphrio Muralto, a sort of anagram, or translation, of the author's own name. It did not, however, long impose upon the critics of the day. It was soon suspected to proceed from a more elegant pen than that of any William Marshall, and, in the second edition, Walpole disclosed the secret. In a private letter, he gave the following account of the origin of the composition, in which he contradicts the ordinary assertion, that it was completed in eight days.

"*9th March*, 1763.

"Shall I confess to you what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning in the beginning of last June from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle, (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story,) and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase, I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it. Add, that I was very glad to think of anything rather than politics. In short, I was so engrossed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months that one evening I wrote from the time I had drank my tea, about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hands and fingers were so weary that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking in the middle of a paragraph."

It doest not seem that the authenticity of the narrative was at first suspected. Mr. Gray writes to Mr. Walpole, on 30th December, 1764: "I have received 'The Castle of Otranto,' and return you my thanks for it. It engages our attention here (*i.e.* at Cambridge), makes some of us cry a little; and all, in general, afraid to go to bed o'nights. We take it for a translation; and should believe it to be a true story, if it were not for St. Nicolas." The friends of the author, as appears from the letter already quoted, were probably soon permitted to peep beneath the veil he had thought proper to assume; and, in the second edition, it was altogether withdrawn by a preface, in which the tendency and nature of the work are shortly commented upon and explained. From the following passage, translated from a letter by the author to Madame Deffand, it would seem that he repented of having laid aside his incognito; and sensitive to criticism, like most *dilettante* authors, was rather more hurt by the raillery of those who liked not his tale of chivalry, than gratified by the applause of his admirers. "So they have translated my 'Castle of Otranto,' probably in ridicule of the author. So be it;—however, I beg you will let their raillery pass in silence. Let the critics have their own way; they give me no uneasiness. I have not written the book for the present age, which will endure nothing but *cold common sense*. I confess to you, my dear friend (and you will think me madder than ever) that this is the only one of my works with which I am myself pleased; I

have given reins to my imagination till I became on fire with the visions and feelings which it excited. I have composed it in defiance of rules, of critics, and of philosophers; and it seems to me just so much the better for that very reason. I am even persuaded that some time hereafter, when taste shall resume the place which philosophy now occupies, my poor 'Castle' will find admirers; we have actually a few among us already, for I am just publishing the third edition. I do not say this in order to mendicate your approbation.* I told you from the beginning you would not like the book,—your visions are all in a different style. I am not sorry that the translator has given the Second Preface; the first, however, accords best with the style of the fiction. I wished it to be believed ancient, and almost everybody was imposed upon." If the public applause, however, was sufficiently qualified by the voice of censure to alarm the feelings of the author, the continued demand for various editions of "The Castle of Otranto," showed how high the work really stood in popular estimation, and probably eventually reconciled Mr. Walpole to the taste of his own age. This romance has been justly considered not only as the original and model of a peculiar species of composition, attempted and successfully executed by a man of great genius, but as one of the standard works of our lighter literature.

Horace Walpole continued the mode of life which he had adopted so early as 1753, until his death, unless it may be considered as an alteration, that his sentiments of Whiggism, which, he himself assures us, almost amounted to Republicanism, received a shock from the French Revolution, which he appears from its commencement to have thoroughly detested. The tenor of his life could be hardly said to suffer interruption by his father's earldom of Orford devolving upon him when he had reached his 74th year, by the death of his nephew. He scarce assumed the title, and died a few years after it had descended to him, 2nd March, 1797, at his house in Berkeley Square.

While these sheets are passing through the press, we have found in Miss Hawkins's very entertaining reminiscences of her early abode at Twickenham, the following description of the person of Horace Walpole, before 1772, giving us the most lively idea of the person and manners of a Man of Fashion about the middle of the last century:—"His figure was not merely tall, but more properly long and slender to excess; his complexion, and particularly his hands, of a most unhealthy paleness. His eyes were remarkably bright and penetrating, very dark and lively:—his voice was not strong, but his tones were extremely pleasant, and, if I may say so, highly gentlemanly. I do not remember his common gait; he always entered a room in that style of affected

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* Madame Deffand had mentioned having read *The Castle of Otranto* twice over; but she did not add a word of approbation. She blamed the translator for giving the Second Preface, chiefly because she thought it might commit Walpole with Voltaire.

delicacy, which fashion had then made almost natural; *chapeau bras* between his hands, as if he wished to compress it, or under his arm; knees bent, and feet on tiptoe, as if afraid of a wet floor.—His dress in visiting was most usually, in summer, when I most saw him, a lavender suit, the waistcoat embroidered with a little silver, or of white silk worked in the tambour, partridge silk stockings, and gold buckles, ruffles and frill generally lace. I remember, when a child, thinking him very much under-dressed, if at any time, except in mourning, he wore hemmed cambric. In summer no powder, but his wig combed straight, and showing his very smooth, pale forehead, and queued behind; in winter, powder."

We cannot help thinking that this most respectable lady, by whose communications respecting eminent individuals the public has been so much obliged, has been a little too severe on the Gothic whims of the architecture at Strawberry Hill. The admirers of the fine arts should have forbearance for each other, when their fervent admiration of a favourite pursuit leads them into those extremes which are *caviare* to the multitude. And as the ear of the architect should not be hasty to condemn the over-learned conceits of the musician, so the eye of the musician should have some toleration for the turrets and pinnacles of the fascinated builder.

It is foreign to our plan to say much of Horace Walpole's individual character. His works bear evidence to his talents; and, even striking out the horribly impressive but disgusting drama of "The Mysterious Mother," and the excellent romance which we are about to analyse more critically, they must leave him the reputation of a man of excellent taste, and certainly of being the best letter-writer in the English language.

In private life, his temper appears to have been precarious; and though expensive in indulging his own taste, he always seems to have done so on the most economical terms possible. He is often, in his epistolary correspondence, harsh and unkind to Madame Deffand, whose talents, her blindness, and her enthusiastic affection for him, claimed every indulgence from a warm-hearted man. He is also severe and rigid towards Bentley, whose taste and talents he had put into continual requisition for the ornaments of his house. These are unamiable traits of character, and they have been quoted often, and exaggerated much. But his memory has suffered most on account of his conduct towards Chatterton, in which we have always thought he was perfectly defensible. That unhappy son of genius endeavoured to impose upon Walpole a few stanzas of very inferior merit, as ancient; and sent him an equally gross and palpable imposture under the shape of a pretended List of Painters. Walpole's sole crime lies in not patronizing at once a young man, who only appeared before him n the character of a very inartificial impostor, though he afterwards proved himself a gigantic one. The fate of Chatterton lies, not at the door of Walpole, but of the public at large, who, two years (we believe) afterwards, were possessed of the splendid proofs of his

natural powers, and any one of whom was as **much** called upon as Walpole to prevent the most unhappy catastrophe.

Finally, it must be recorded to Walpole's praise, that, though not habitually liberal, he was strictly just, and readily parted with that portion of his income which the necessities of the State required. He may, perhaps, have mistaken his character when he assumes as its principal characteristic, "disinterestedness and contempt of money," which, he intimates, was with him less "a virtue than a passion." But by the generous and apparently most sincere offer to divide his whole income with Marshal Conway, he showed, that if there existed in his bosom more love of money than perhaps he was himself aware of, it was subjugated to the influence of the nobler virtues and feelings.

We are now to offer a few remarks on "The Castle of Otranto," and on the class of compositions to which it belongs, and of which it was the precursor.

It is doing injustice to Mr. Walpole's memory to allege, that all which he aimed at in "The Castle of Otranto," was "the art of exciting surprise and horror;" or, in other words, the appeal to that secret and reserved feeling of love for the marvellous and supernatural, which occupies a hidden corner in almost every one's bosom. Were this all which he had attempted, the means by which he sought to attain his purpose might, with justice, be termed both clumsy and puerile. But Mr. Walpole's purpose was both more difficult of attainment, and more important when attained. It was his object to draw such a picture of domestic life and manners, during the feudal times, as might actually have existed, and to paint it chequered and agitated by the action of supernatural machinery, such as the superstition of the period received as matter of devout credulity. The natural parts of the narrative are so contrived that they associate themselves with the marvellous occurrences; and, by the force of that association, render those *speciosa miracula* striking and impressive, though our cooler reason admits their impossibility. Indeed, to produce, in a well-cultivated mind, any portion of that surprise and fear which are founded on supernatural events, the frame and tenor of the whole story must be adjusted in perfect harmony with this mainspring of the interest. He who, in early youth, has happened to pass a solitary night in one of the few ancient mansions which the fashion of more modern times has left undespoiled of their original furniture, has probably experienced, that the gigantic and preposterous figures dimly visible in the defaced tapestry,—the remote clang of the distant doors which divide him from living society,—the deep darkness which involves the high and fretted roof of the apartment,—the dimly-seen pictures of ancient knights, renowned for their valour, and perhaps for their crimes, the varied and indistinct sounds which disturb the silent desolation of a half-deserted mansion,—and, to crown all, the feeling that carries us back to ages of feudal power and papal superstition, join together to excite a corresponding sensation of supernatural awe, if not of terror. It is in such situations, when superstition becomes

contagious, that we listen with respect, and even with dread, to the legends which are our sport in the garish light of sunshine, and amid the dissipating sights and sounds of every-day life. Now, it seems to have been Walpole's object to attain, by the minute accuracy of a fable, sketched with singular attention to the costume of the period in which the scene was laid, that same association which might prepare his reader's mind for the reception of prodigies congenial to the creed and feelings of the actors. His feudal tyrant, his distressed damsel, his resigned yet dignified churchman,—the Castle itself, with its feudal arrangements of dungeons, trap-doors, oratories, and galleries,—the incidents of the trial, the chivalrous procession, and the combat;—in short, the scene, the performers, and action, so far as it is natural, form the accompaniments of his spectres and his miracles, and have the same effect on the mind of the reader, that the appearance and drapery of such a chamber as we have described may produce upon that of a temporary inmate. This was a task which required no little learning, no ordinary degree of fancy, no common portion of genius, to execute. The association of which we have spoken is of a nature peculiarly delicate, and subject to be broken and disarranged. It is, for instance, almost impossible to build such a modern Gothic structure as shall impress us with the feelings we have endeavoured to describe. It may be grand, or it may be gloomy; it may excite magnificent or melancholy ideas; but it must fail in bringing forth the sensation of supernatural awe, connected with halls that have echoed to the sounds of remote generations, and have been pressed by the footsteps of those who have long since passed away. Yet Horace Walpole has attained in composition, what, as an architect, he must have felt beyond the power of his art. The remote and superstitious period in which his scene is laid,—the art with which he has furnished forth its Gothic decorations,—the sustained, and, in general, the dignified tone of feudal manners,—prepare us gradually for the favourable reception of prodigies, which, though they could not really have happened at any period, were consistent with the belief of all mankind at that in which the action is placed. It was, therefore, the author's object, not merely to excite surprise and terror, by the introduction of supernatural agency, but to wind up the feelings of his reader till they became for a moment identified with those of a ruder age, which

> Held each strange tale devoutly true.

The difficulty of attaining this nice accuracy of delineation may be best estimated by comparing "The Castle of Otranto" with the less successful efforts of later writers; where, amid all their attempts to assume the tone of antique chivalry, something occurs in every chapter so decidedly incongruous, as at once reminds us of an ill-sustained masquerade, in which ghosts, knights-errant, magicians, and damsels gent, are all equipped in hired dresses from the same warehouse in Tavistock Street.

There is a remarkable particular in which Mr. Walpole's steps have been departed from by the most distinguished of his followers.

Romantic narrative is of two kinds,—that which, being in itself possible, may be matter of belief at any period; and that which, though held impossible by more enlightened ages, was yet consonant with the faith of earlier times. The subject of "The Castle of Otranto" is of the latter class. Mrs. Radcliffe, a name not to be mentioned without the high respect due to genius, has endeavoured to effect a compromise between those different styles of narrative, by referring her prodigies to an explanation founded on natural causes, in the latter chapters of her romances. To this improvement upon the Gothic romance there are so many objections, that we own ourselves inclined to prefer, as more simple and impressive, the narrative of Walpole, which details supernatural incidents as they would have been readily believed and received in the eleventh and twelfth century. In the first place, the reader feels indignant at discovering that he has been cheated into sympathy with terrors, which are finally explained as having proceeded from some very simple cause; and the interest of a second reading is entirely destroyed by his having been admitted behind the scenes at the conclusion of the first. Secondly, The precaution of relieving our spirits from the influence of supposed supernatural terror, seems as unnecessary in a work of professed fiction, as that of the prudent Bottom, who proposed that the human face of the representative of his lion should appear from under his mask, and acquaint the audience plainly that he was a man as other men, and nothing more than Snug the joiner. Lastly, These substitutes for supernatural agency are frequently to the full as improbable as the machinery which they are introduced to explain away and to supplant. The reader, who is required to admit the belief of supernatural interference, understands precisely what is demanded of him; and, if he be truly a gentle reader, throws his mind into the attitude best adapted to humour the deceit which is presented for his entertainment, and grants, for the time of perusal, the premises on which the fable depends.* But if the author voluntarily binds himself to account for all the wondrous occurrences which he introduces, we are entitled to exact that the explanation shall be natural, easy, ingenious, and complete. Every reader of such works must remember instances in which the explanation of mysterious circumstances in the narrative has proved equally, nay, even more incredible, than if they had been accounted for by the agency of supernatural beings; for the most incredulous must allow that the interference of such agency is more possible than that an effect resembling it should be produced by an utterly inadequate cause. But it is unnecessary to enlarge further on a part of the subject which we have only mentioned to exculpate our author from the charge of using

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* There are instances to the contrary, however. For example, that stern votary of severe truth, who cast aside Gulliver's Travels as containing a parcel of improbable fictions.

machinery more clumsy than his tale from its nature required. The bold assertion of the actual existence of phantoms and apparitions seems to us to harmonize much more naturally with the manners of ancient times, and to produce a more powerful effect upon the reader's mind, than any attempt to reconcile the superstitious credulity of feudal ages with the philosophic scepticism of our own, by referring those prodigies to the operation of fulminating powder, combined mirrors, magic lanterns, trap-doors, speaking trumpets, and such-like apparatus of German phantasmagoria.

It cannot, however, be denied that the character of the supernatural machinery in "The Castle of Otranto" is liable to objections. Its action and interference is rather too frequent, and presses too hard and constantly upon the same feelings in the reader's mind, to the hazard of diminishing the elasticity of the spring upon which it should operate. The fund of fearful sympathy which can be afforded by a modern reader to a tale of wonder is much diminished by the present habits of life and modes of education. Our ancestors could wonder and thrill through all the mazes of an interminable metrical romance of fairyland, and of an enchantment, the work perhaps of some

> Prevailing poet, whose undoubting mind
> Believed the magic wonders which he sung.

But our own habits and feelings and belief are different, and a transient, though vivid impression, is all that can be excited by a tale of wonder, even in the most fanciful mind of the present day. By the too frequent recurrence of his prodigies, Mr. Walpole ran, perhaps, his greatest risk of awakening *la raison froide*, that "cold common sense," which he justly deemed the greatest enemy of the effect which he hoped to produce. It may be added, also, that the supernatural occurrences of "The Castle of Otranto" are brought forward into too strong daylight, and marked by an over degree of distinctness and accuracy of outline. A mysterious obscurity seems congenial at least, if not essential, to our ideas of disembodied spirits; and the gigantic limbs of the ghost of Alphonso, as described by the terrified domestics, are somewhat too distinct and corporeal to produce the feelings which their appearance is intended to excite. This fault, however, if it be one, is more than compensated by the high merit of many of the marvellous incidents in the romance. The descent of the picture of Manfred's ancestor, although it borders on extravagance, is finely introduced, and interrupts an interesting dialogue with striking effect. We have heard it observed that the animated figure should rather have been a statue than a picture. We greatly doubt the justice of the criticism. The advantages of the colouring induce us decidedly to prefer Mr Walpole's fiction to the proposed substitute. There are few who have not felt, at some period of their childhood, a sort of terror from the manner in which the eye of an ancient portrait appears to fix that of the spectator from every point of view. It is, perhaps, hypercritical to remark (what, however, Walpole of all authors

might have been expected to attend to) that the time assigned to the action, being about the eleventh century, is rather too early for the introduction of a full-length portrait. The apparition of the skeleton hermit to the Prince of Vicenza was long accounted a master-piece of the horrible; but of late the valley of Jehoshaphat could hardly supply the dry bones necessary for the exhibition of similar spectres, so that injudicious and repeated imitation has, in some degree, injured the effect of its original model. What is more striking in "The Castle of Otranto," is the manner in which the various prodigious appearances, bearing each upon the other, and all upon the accomplishment of the ancient prophecy, denouncing the ruin of the house of Manfred, gradually prepare us for the grand catastrophe. The moonlight vision of Alphonso dilated to immense magnitude, the astonished group of spectators in the front, and the shattered ruins of the castle in the back-ground, are briefly and sublimely described. We know no passage of similar merit, unless it be the apparition of Fedzean, or Fadoun, in an ancient Scottish poem.*

That part of the romance which depends upon human feeling and agency, is conducted with the dramatic talent which afterwards was so conspicuous in "The Mysterious Mother." The persons are indeed rather generic than individual; but this was in a degree necessary to a plan calculated rather to exhibit a general view of society and manners during the times which the author's imagination loved to contemplate, than the most minute shades and discriminating points of particular characters. But the actors in the romance are strikingly drawn, with bold outlines becoming the age and nature of the story. Feudal tyranny was, perhaps, never better exemplified, than in the character of Manfred. He has the courage, the art, the duplicity, the ambition, of a barbarous chieftain of the dark ages, yet with touches of remorse and natural feeling, which preserve some sympathy for him when his pride is quelled, and his race extinguished. The pious Monk, and the patient Hippolita, are well contrasted with this selfish and tyrannical Prince. Theodore is the juvenile hero of a romantic tale, and Matilda has more interesting sweetness than usually belongs to its heroine. As the character of Isabella is studiously kept down, in order to relieve that of the daughter of Manfred, few readers are pleased with the concluding insinuation, that she became at length the bride of Theodore. This is in some degree a departure from the rules of chivalry; and, however, natural an occurrence in common life, rather injures the magic illusions of romance. In other respects, making an allowance for the extraordinary incidents of a dark and tempestuous age, the story, so far as within the course of natural events, is happily detailed, its progress is uniform, its events interesting and well combined, and the conclusion grand, tragical, and affecting.

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* This spectre, the ghost of a follower whom he had slain upon suspicion of treachery, appeared to no less a person than Wallace, the champion of Scotland, in the ancient castle of Gask-hall.—See Ellis's *Specimens*, vol. i.

The style of "The Castle of Otranto" is pure and correct English of the earlier and more classical standard. Mr. Walpole rejected, upon taste and principle, those heavy though powerful auxiliaries which Dr. Johnson imported from the Latin language, and which have since proved to many a luckless wight, who has essayed to use them, as unmanageable as the gauntlets of Eryx,

et pondus et ipsa
Huc illuc vinclorum immensa volumina versat.

Neither does the purity of Mr. Walpole's language, and the simplicity of his narrative, admit that luxuriant, florid, and high varnished landscape-painting, with which Mrs. Radcliffe often adorned, and not unfrequently encumbered, her kindred romances. Description, for its own sake, is scarcely once attempted in "The Castle of Otranto;" and if authors would consider how very much this restriction tends to realize narrative, they might be tempted to abridge at least the showy and wordy exuberance of a style fitter for poetry than prose. It is for the dialogue that Walpole reserves his strength; and it is remarkable how, while conducting his mortal agents with all the art of a modern dramatist, he adheres to the sustained tone of chivalry, which marks the period of the action. This is not attained by patching his narrative or dialogue with glossarial terms, or antique phraseology, but by taking care to exclude all that can awaken modern associations. In the one case, his romance would have resembled a modern dress, preposterously decorated with antique ornaments; in its present shape, he has retained the form of the ancient armour, but not its rust and cobwebs. In illustration of what is above stated, we refer the reader to the first interview of Manfred with the Prince of Vicenza, where the manners and language of chivalry are finely painted, as well as the perturbation of conscious guilt, confusing itself in attempted exculpation, even before a mute accuser. The characters of the inferior domestics have been considered as not bearing a proportion sufficiently dignified to the rest of the story. But this is a point on which the author has pleaded his own cause fully in the original Prefaces.

We have only to add, in conclusion to these desultory remarks, that if Horace Walpole, who led the way in this new species of literary composition, has been surpassed by some of his followers in diffuse brilliancy of description, and perhaps in the art of detaining the mind of the reader in a state of feverish and anxious suspense, through a protracted and complicated narrative, more will yet remain with him than the single merit of originality and invention. The applause due to chastity and precision of style,—to a happy combination of supernatural agency with human interest,—to a tone of feudal manners and language, sustained by characters strongly drawn and well discriminated,—and to unity of action, producing scenes alternately of interest and of grandeur;—the applause, in fine, which cannot be denied to him who can excite the passions of fear and of pity, must be awarded to the author of "The Castle of Otranto."

CLARA REEVE.

CLARA REEVE, the ingenious authoress of "The Old English Baron," was the daughter of the Reverend William Reeve, M.A., Rector of Freston, and of Kerton, in Suffolk, and Perpetual Curate of Saint Nicholas. Her grandfather was the Reverend Thomas Reeve, Rector of Storeham Aspal, and afterwards of St. Mary Stoke, in Ipswich, where the family had been long resident, and enjoyed the rights of free burghers. Miss Reeve's mother's maiden name was Smithies, daughter of —— Smithies, goldsmith and jeweller to King George I.

In a letter to a friend, Miss Reeve thus speaks of her father:—"My father was an old Whig; from him I have learned all that I know; he was my oracle; he used to make me read the Parliamentary debates, while he smoked his pipe after supper. I gaped and yawned over them at the time, but, unawares to myself, they fixed my principles once and for ever. He made me read Rapin's 'History of England;' the information it gave, made amends for its dryness. I read 'Cato's Letters,' by Trenchard and Gordon; I read the Greek and Roman Histories, and 'Plutarch's Lives:'—all these at an age when few people of either sex can read their names."

The Reverend Mr. Reeve, himself one of a family of eight children, had the same numerous succession; and it is therefore likely, that it was rather Clara's strong natural turn for study, than any degree of exclusive care which his partiality bestowed, which enabled her to acquire such a stock of early information. After his death, his widow resided in Colchester with three of their daughters; and it was here that Miss Clara Reeve first became an authoress, by translating from the Latin Barclay's fine old romance, entitled "Argenis," published in 1762, under the title of "The Phœnix." It was in 1777, five years afterwards, that she produced her first and most distinguished work. It was published by Mr. Dilly of the Poultry (who gave ten pounds for the copyright) under the title of "The Champion of Virtue, a Gothic Story." The work came to a second edition in the succeeding year, and was then first called "The Old English Baron." The cause of the change we do not pretend to guess; for if Fitzowen be considered as the old English Baron, we do not see wherefore a character, passive in himself from beginning to end, and only acted upon by others, should be selected to give a name to the story. We ought not to omit to mention, that this work is inscribed to Mrs. Brigden, the

daughter of Richardson, who is stated to have lent her assistance to the revisal and correction of the work.

The success of "The Old English Baron" encouraged Miss Reeve to devote more of her leisure hours to literary composition, and she published in succession the following works:—"The Two Mentors, a Modern Story;" the "Progress of Romance, through Times, Countries, and Manners;" "The Exile: or Memoirs of the Count de Cronstadt," the principal incidents of which are borrowed from a novel by M. D'Arnaud; "The School for Widows, a Novel;" "Plans of Education, with Remarks on the System of other Writers," in a duodecimo volume; and "The Memoirs of Sir Roger de Clarendon, a natural Son of Edward the Black Prince; with Anecdotes of many other eminent Persons of the fourteenth Century."

To these works we have to add another tale, of which the interest turned upon supernatural appearances. Miss Reeve informed the public, in a preface to her last edition of "The Old English Baron," that in compliance with the suggestion of a friend, she had composed "Castle Connor, an Irish Story," in which apparitions were introduced. The manuscript, being intrusted to some careless or unfaithful person, fell aside, and was never recovered.

The various novels of Clara Reeve are all marked by excellent good sense, pure morality, and a competent command of those qualities which constitute a good romance. They were, generally speaking, favourably received at the time, but none of them took the same strong possession of the public mind as "The Old English Baron," upon which the fame of the author may be considered as now exclusively rested.

Miss Reeve, respected and beloved, led a retired life, admitting no materials for biography, until 3rd December, 1803, when she died at Ipswich, her native city, at the advanced age of seventy-eight years. She was buried in the churchyard of St. Stephen's, according to her particular direction, near to the grave of her friend, the Reverend Mr. Derby. Her brother, the Rev. Thomas Reeve, and her sister, Mrs. Sarah Reeve, both lived to an advanced age. Another brother, bred to the navy, attained the rank of vice-admiral in that service.

Such are the only particulars which we have been able to collect concerning this accomplished and estimable woman, and, in their simplicity, the reader may remark that of her life and of her character. As critics, it is our duty to make some further observations, which shall be entirely confined to her most celebrated work, upon which her fame arose, and on which, without meaning disparagement to her other compositions, we conceive it entitled to rest.

The authoress has herself informed us that "The Old English Baron" is the "literary offspring of 'The Castle of Otranto;'" and she has obliged us by pointing out the different and more limited view which she had adopted, of the supernatural machinery employed by Horace Walpole. She condemns the latter for the extravagance of several of his conceptions; for the gigantic size of his sword and

helmet; and for the violent fictions of a walking picture, and a skeleton in a hermit's cowl. A ghost, she contends, to be admitted as an ingredient in romance, must behave himself like ghosts of sober demeanour, and subject himself to the common rules still preserved in grange and hall, as circumscribing beings of his description.

We must, however, notwithstanding her authority, enter our protest against fettering the realm of shadows by the opinions entertained of it in the world of realities. If we are to try ghosts by the ordinary rules of humanity, we bar them of their privileges entirely. For instance, why admit the existence of an aerial phantom, and deny it the terrible attribute of magnifying its stature? why admit an enchanted helmet, and not a gigantic one? why allow as an impressive incident the fall of a suit of armour, thrown down, we must suppose, by no mortal hand, and at the same time deny the same supernatural influence the power of producing the illusion (for it is only represented as such) upon "Manfred," which gives seeming motion and life to the portrait of his ancestor? It may be said, and it seems to be Miss Reeve's argument, that there is a verge of probability, which even the most violent figment must not transgress; but we reply by the cross question, that if we are once to subject our preternatural agents to the limits of human reason, where are we to stop? We might, under such a rule, demand of ghosts an account of the very circuitous manner in which they are pleased to open their communications with the living world. We might, for example, move a *quo warranto* against the spectre of the murdered Lord Lovel, for lurking about the eastern apartment, when it might have been reasonably expected, that if he did not at once impeach his murderers to the next magistrate, he might at least have put Fitzowen into the secret, and thus obtained the succession of his son more easily than by the dubious and circuitous route of a single combat. If there should be an appeal against this imputation, founded on the universal practice of ghosts in such circumstances, who always act with singular obliquity in disclosing the guilt of which they complain, the matter becomes a question of precedent; in which view of the case, we may vindicate Horace Walpole for the gigantic exaggeration of his phantom, by the similar expansion of the terrific vision of Fawdoun, in Blind Harry's "Life of Wallace;"[1] and we could, were we so disposed, have paralleled his moving picture, by the example of one with which we ourselves had some acquaintance, which was said both to move and to utter groans, to the great alarm of a family of the highest respectability.

Where, then, may the reader ask, is the line to be drawn? or what are the limits to be placed to the reader's credulity, when those of common sense and ordinary nature are once exceeded? The question admits only one answer, namely, that the author himself, being in fact the magician, shall evoke no spirits whom he is not capable of endowing with manners and language corresponding to their supernatural character. Thus Shakspeare, drawing such characters as Caliban and Ariel, gave them reality, not by appealing to actual

opinions which his audience might entertain respecting the possibility or impossibility of their existence, but by investing them with such attributes as all readers and spectators recognized as those which must have corresponded to such extraordinary beings, had their existence been possible. If he had pleased to put into language the "squeaking and gibbering" of those disembodied phantoms which haunted the streets of Rome, no doubt his wonderful imagination could have filled up the sketch, which, marked by these two emphatic and singularly felicitous expressions, he has left as characteristic of the language of the dead.

In this point of view, our authoress has, with equal judgment and accuracy, confined her flight within those limits on which her pinions could support her; and though we are disposed to contest her general principle, we are willing to admit it as a wise and prudent one, so far as applied to regulate her own composition. In no part of "The Old English Baron," or of any other of her works, does Miss Reeve show the possession of a rich or powerful imagination. Her dialogue is sensible, easy, and agreeable, but neither marked by high flights of fancy, nor strong bursts of passion. Her apparition is an ordinary fiction, of which popular superstition used to furnish a thousand instances, when nights were long, and a family, assembled round a Christmas log, had little better to do than to listen to such tales. Miss Reeve has been very felicitously cautious in showing us no more of Lord Lovel's ghost than she needs must—he is a silent apparition, palpable to the sight only, and never brought forward into such broad daylight as might have dissolved our reverence. And so far, we repeat, the authoress has used her own power to the utmost advantage, and gained her point by not attempting a step beyond it. But we cannot allow that the rule which, in her own case, has been well and wisely adopted, ought to circumscribe a bolder and a more imaginative writer.

In what may be called the costume, or keeping, of the chivalrous period in which the scene of both is laid, the language and style of Horace Walpole, together with his intimate acquaintance with the manners of the Middle Ages, form an incalculable difference betwixt "The Castle of Otranto" and "The Old English Baron." Clara Reeve, probably, was better acquainted with Plutarch and Rapin, than with Froissart or Olivier de la Marche. This is no imputation on the taste of that ingenious lady. In her days, Macbeth was performed in a general's full uniform, and Lord Hastings was dressed like a modern high chamberlain going to court. Or, if she looked to romances for her authority, those of the French school were found introducing, under the reign of Cyrus or of Faramond, or in the early republic of Rome, the sentiments and manners of the court of Louis XIV. In the present day, more attention to costume is demanded, and authors, as well as players, are obliged to make attempts, however fantastic or grotesque, to imitate the manners, on the one hand, and the dress on the other, of the times in which the scene is laid. Formerly, nothing

of this kind was either required or expected; and it is not improbable that the manner in which Walpole circumscribes his dialogue (in most instances) within the stiff and stern precincts prescribed by a strict attention to the manners and language of the times, is the first instance of such restrictions. In "The Old English Baron," on the contrary, all parties speak and act much in the fashion of the seventeenth century; employ the same phrases of courtesy; and adopt the same tone of conversation. Baron Fitzowen, and the principal characters, talk after the fashion of country squires of that period, and the lower personages like gaffers and gammers of the same era. And "were but the combat in lists left out," or converted into a modern duel, the whole train of incidents might, for any peculiarity to be traced in the dialect or narration, have taken place in the time of Charles II,, or in either of the two succeeding reigns. As it is, the story reads as if it had been transcribed into the language, and remodelled according to the ideas of this latter period. Yet we are uncertain whether, upon the whole, this does not rather add to, than diminish the interest of the work;—at least it gives an interest of a different kind, which, if it cannot compete with that which arises out of a highly exalted and poetical imagination, and a strict attention to the character and manners of the Middle Ages, has yet this advantage, that it reaches its point more surely, than had a higher, more difficult, and more ambitious line of composition been attempted.

To explain our meaning:—He that would please the modern world, yet present the exact impression of a tale of the Middle Ages, will repeatedly find out that he will be obliged, in despite of his utmost exertions, to sacrifice the last to the first object, and eternally expose himself to the just censure of the rigid antiquary, because he must, to interest the readers of the present time, invest his characters with language and sentiments unknown to the period assigned to his story; and thus his utmost efforts only attain a sort of composition between the true and the fictitious,—just as the dress of Lear, as performed on the stage, is neither that of a modern sovereign, nor the cerulean painting and bear-hide with which the Britons, at the time when that monarch is supposed to have lived, tattooed their persons, and sheltered themselves from cold. All this inconsistency is avoided, by adopting the style of our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, sufficiently antiquated to accord with the antiquated character of the narrative, yet copious enough to express all that is necessary to its interest, and to supply that deficiency of colouring which the more ancient times do not afford.

It is no doubt true, that "The Old English Baron," written in the latter and less ambitious taste, is sometimes tame and tedious, not to say mean and tiresome. The total absence of peculiar character (for every person introduced is rather described as one of a genus than as an original, discriminated, and individual person), may have its effect in producing the tedium which loads the story in some places. This is a general defect in the novels of the period, and it was scarce to be

expected that the amiable and accomplished authoress, in her secluded situation, and with acquaintance of events and characters derived from books alone, should have rivalled those authors who gathered their knowledge of the human heart from having, like Fielding and Smollett, become acquainted, by sad experience, with each turn of "many-coloured life." Nor was it to be thought that she should have emulated in this particular her prototype Walpole, who, as a statesman, a poet, and a man of the world "who knew the world like a man," has given much individual character to his sketch of Manfred. What we here speak of is not the deficiency in the style and costume, but a certain creeping and low line of narrative and sentiment; which may be best illustrated by the grave and minute accounting into which Sir Philip Harclay and the Baron Fitzowen enter,—after an event so unpleasant as the judgment of Heaven upon a murderer, brought about by a judicial combat, and that combat occasioned by the awful and supernatural occcurrences in the eastern chamber,—where we find the arrears of the estate gravely set off against the education of the heir, and his early maintenance in the Baron's family. Yet even these prolix, minute and unnecessary details, are precisely such as would occur in a similar story told by a grandsire or grandame to a circle assembled round a winter's fire; and while they take from the dignity of the composition, and would therefore have been rejected by a writer of more exalted imagination, do certainly add in some degree to its reality, and bear in that respect a resemblance to the art with which De Foe impresses on his readers the truth of his fictions, by the insertion of many minute, and immaterial, or unnatural circumstances, which we are led to suppose could only be recorded because they are true. Perhaps, to be circumstantial and abundant in minute detail, and in one word, though an unauthorized one, to be somewhat *prosy*, is a secret mode of securing a certain necessary degree of credulity from the hearers of a ghost-story. It gives a sort of quaint antiquity to the whole, as belonging to the times of "superstitious elde," and those whom we have observed to excel in oral narratives of such a nature, usually study to secure the attention of their audience by employing this art. At least, whether owing to this mode of telling her tale, or to the interest of the story itself, and its appeal to the secret reserve of superstitious feeling which maintains its influence in most bosoms, "The Old English Baron" has always produced as strong an effect as any story of the kind, although liable to the objections which we have freely stated, without meaning to impeach the talents of the amiable authoress.

MRS. ANN RADCLIFFE.

THE life of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, spent in the quiet shade of domestic privacy, and in the interchange of familiar affections and sympathies, appears to have been as retired and sequestered, as the fame of her writings was brilliant and universal. The most authentic account of her birth, family, and personal appearance, seems to be that contained in the following communication to a work of contemporary biography.

"She was born in London, in the year 1764 [9th July]; the daughter of William and Ann Ward, who, though in trade, were nearly the only persons of their two families not living in handsome, or at least easy independence. Her paternal grandmother was a Cheselden, the sister of the celebrated surgeon, of whose kind regard her father had a grateful recollection, and some of whose presents, in books, I have seen. The late Lieutenant-Colonel Cheselden, of Somerby, in Leicestershire, was, I think, another nephew of the surgeon. Her father's aunt, the late Mrs. Barwell, first of Leicester, and then of Duffield, in Derbyshire, was one of the sponsors at her baptism. Her maternal grandmother was Anne Oates, the sister of Dr. Samuel Jebb, of Stratford, who was the father of Sir Richard: on that side she was also related to Dr. Halifax, Bishop of Gloucester, and to Dr. Halifax, Physician to the King. Perhaps it may gratify curiosity to state further, that she was descended from a near relative of the De Witts of Holland. In some family papers which I have seen, it is stated that a De Witt, of the family of John and Cornelius, came to England, under the patronage of government, upon some design of draining the fens in Lincolnshire, bringing with him a daughter, Amelia, then an infant. The prosecution of the plan is supposed to have been interrupted by the rebellion, in the time of Charles the First; but De Witt appears to have passed the remainder of his life in a mansion near Hull, and to have left many children, of whom Amelia was the mother of one of Mrs. Radcliffe's ancestors.

"This admirable writer, whom I remember from about the time of her twentieth year, was, in her youth, of a figure exquisitely proportioned; while she resembled her father, and his brother and sister, in being low of stature. Her complexion was beautiful, as was her whole countenance, especially her eyes, eyebrows, and mouth. Of the faculties of her mind, let her works speak. Her tastes were such as might be expected from those works. To contemplate the glories of creation, but more particularly the grander features of their display, was one of

her chief delights; to listen to fine music was another. She had also a gratification in listening to any good verbal sounds; and would desire to hear passages repeated from the Latin and Greek classics; requiring, at intervals, the most literal translations that could be given, with all that was possible of their idiom, how much soever the version might be embarrassed by that aim at exactness. Though her fancy was prompt, and she was, as will readily be supposed, qualified in many respects for conversation, she had not the confidence and presence of mind, without which, a person conscious of being observed, can scarcely be at ease, except in long-tried society. Yet she had not been without some good examples of what must have been ready conversation in more extensive circles. Besides that a great part of her youth had been passed in the residence of her superior relatives, she had the advantage of being much loved, when a child, by the late Mr. Bentley; to whom, on the establishment of the fabric known by the name of Wedgwood and Bentley's, was appropriated the superintendence of all that related to form and design. Mr. Wedgwood was the intelligent man of commerce, and the able chemist; Mr. Bentley the man of more general literature, and of taste in the arts. One of her mother's sisters was married to Mr. Bentley; and, during the life of her aunt, who was accomplished 'according to the moderation,'—may I say, the *wise* moderation?—of that day, the little niece was a favourite guest at Chelsea, and afterwards at Turnham Green, where Mr. and Mrs. Bentley resided. At their house she saw several persons of distinction for literature; and others who, without having been so distinguished, were beneficial objects of attention for their minds and their manners. Of the former class the late Mrs. Montague, and once, I think, Mrs. Piozzi; of the latter, Mrs. Ord. The gentleman, called Athenian Stuart, was also a visitor there."

Thus respectably born and connected, Miss Ward, at the age of twenty-three, acquired the name which she made so famous, by marrying William Radcliffe, Esq., graduated at Oxford, and a student of law. He renounced the prosecution of his legal studies, and became afterwards proprietor and editor of the *English Chronicle*.

Thus connected in a manner which must have induced her to cherish her literary powers, Mrs. Radcliffe first came before the public as a novelist in 1789, only two years after her marriage, and when she was twenty-five years old. A romance, entitled "The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne," which she then produced, gave but moderate intimation of the author's eminent powers. The scene is laid in Scotland, during the dark ages, but without any attempt to trace either the peculiar manners or scenery of the country; and although, in reading the work with that express purpose, we can now trace some germs of that taste and talent for the wild, romantic, and mysterious, which the authoress afterwards employed with such effect, we cannot consider the work, on the whole, as by any means worthy of her pen. It is nevertheless curious to compare this sketch with Mrs. Radcliffe's more esteemed productions, since it is of consequence to the history of human genius

to preserve its earlier efforts, that we may trace, if possible, how the oak at length germinates from the unmarked acorn.

Mrs. Radcliffe's genius was more advantageously displayed in the "Sicilian Romance," which appeared in 1790, and which, as we ourselves (then novel-readers of no ordinary appetite) well recollect, attracted in a considerable degree the attention of the public. This work displays the exuberance and fertility of imagination, which was the author's principal characteristic. Adventures heaped on adventures, in quick and brilliant succession, with all the hair-breadth charms of escape or capture, hurry the reader along with them, and the imagery and scenery by which the action is relieved, are like those of a splendid Oriental tale. Still this work had marked traces of the defects natural to an unpractised author. The scenes were inartificially connected, and the characters hastily sketched, without any attempt at individual distinctions; being cast in the usual mould of ardent lovers, tyrannical parents, with domestic ruffians, guards, and others, who had wept or stormed through the chapters of romance, without much alteration in their family habits or features, for a quarter of a century before Mrs. Radcliffe's time. Nevertheless, the "Sicilian Romance" attracted much notice among the novel-readers of the day, as far excelling the ordinary meagreness of stale and uninteresting incident with which they were at that time regaled from the Leadenhall press. Indeed, the praise may be claimed for Mrs. Radcliffe, of having been the first to introduce into her prose fictions a beautiful and fanciful tone of natural description and impressive narrative, which had hitherto been exclusively applied to poetry. Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, even Walpole, though writing upon an imaginative subject, are decidedly prose authors. Mrs. Radcliffe has a title to be considered as the first poetess of romantic fiction, that is, if actual rhythm shall not be deemed essential to poetry.

"The Romance of the Forest," which appeared in 1791, placed the author at once in that rank and pre-eminence in her own particular style of composition which her works have ever since maintained. Her fancy, in this new effort, was more regulated, and subjected to the fetters of a regular story. The persons, too, although perhaps there is nothing very original in the conception, were depicted with skill far superior to that which the author had hitherto displayed, and the work attracted the public attention in proportion. That of La Motte, indeed, is sketched with particular talent, and most part of the interest of the piece depends upon the vacillations of a character, who, though upon the whole we may rather term him weak and vicious, than villanous, is, nevertheless, at every moment on the point of becoming an agent in atrocities which his heart disapproves of. He is the exact picture "of the needy man who has known better days;" one who, spited at the world, from which he has been expelled with contempt, and condemned by circumstances to seek an asylum in a desolate mansion full of mysteries and horrors, avenges himself, by playing the gloomy despot within his own family, and tyrannizing

over those who were subjected to him only by their strong sense of duty. A more powerful agent appears on the scene—obtains the mastery over this dark but irresolute spirit, and, by alternate exertion of seduction and terror, compels him to be his agent in schemes against the virtue, and even the life of an orphan, whom he was bound in gratitude, as well as in honour and hospitality, to cherish and protect.

The heroine, too, wearing the usual costume of innocence, purity, and simplicity, as proper to heroines as white gowns are to the sex in general, has some pleasant touches of originality. Her grateful affection for the La Motte family—her reliance on their truth and honour, when the wife had become unkind, and the father treacherous towards her, is an interesting and individual trait in her character.

But although undoubtedly the talents of Mrs. Radcliffe, in the important point of drawing and finishing the characters of her narrative, were greatly improved since her earlier attempts, and manifested sufficient power to raise her far above the common crowd of novelists, this was not the department of art on which her popularity rested. The public were chiefly aroused, or rather fascinated, by the wonderful conduct of a story, in which the author so successfully called out the feelings of mystery and of awe, while chapter after chapter, and incident after incident, maintained the thrilling attraction of awakened curiosity and suspended interest. Of these, every reader felt the force, from the sage in his study, to the family group in middle life, which assembles round the evening taper, to seek a solace from the toils of ordinary existence by an excursion into the regions of imagination. The tale was the more striking, because varied and relieved by descriptions of the ruined mansion, and the forest with which it is surrounded, under so many different points, now pleasing and serene, now gloomy, now terrible—scenes which could only have been drawn by one to whom nature had given the eye of a painter, with the spirit of a poet.

In 1793, Mrs. Radcliffe had the advantage of visiting the scenery of the Rhine, and, although we are not positive of the fact, we are strongly inclined to suppose, that "The Mysteries of Udolpho" were written, or at least corrected, after the date of this journey; for the mouldering castles of the robber-chivalry of Germany, situated on the wild and romantic banks of that celebrated stream, seem to have given a bolder flight to her imagination, and a more glowing character to her colouring, than are exhibited in "The Romance of the Forest." The scenery on the Lakes of Westmoreland, which Mrs. Radcliffe visited about the same time, was also highly calculated to awaken her fancy, as nature has in these wild but beautiful regions realized the descriptions in which this authoress loved to indulge. Her remarks upon these countries were given to the public in 1794, in a very well written work, entitled, "A Journey through Holland," &c.

Much was of course expected from Mrs. Radcliffe's next effort, and the booksellers felt themselves authorized in offering what was then considered as an unprecedented sum, 500*l*., for "The Mysteries of Udolpho." It often happens, that a writer's previous reputation

proves the greatest enemy which, in a second attempt upon public favour, he has to encounter. Exaggerated expectations are excited and circulated, and criticism, which had been seduced into former approbation by the pleasure of surprise, now stands awakened and alert to pounce upon every failing. Mrs. Radcliffe's popularity, however, stood the test, and was heightened rather than diminished by "The Mysteries of Udolpho." The very name was fascinating, and the public, who rushed upon it with all the eagerness of curiosity, rose from it with unsated appetite. When a family was numerous, the volumes always flew, and were sometimes torn, from hand to hand, and the complaints of those whose studies were thus interrupted, were a general tribute to the genius of the author. Another might be found of a different and higher description, in the dwelling of the lonely invalid, or unregarded votary of celibacy, who was bewitched away from a sense of solitude, of indisposition, of the neglect of the world, or of secret sorrow, by the potent charm of this mighty enchantress. Perhaps the perusal of such works may, without injustice, be compared with the use of opiates, baneful, when habitually and constantly resorted to, but of most blessed power in those moments of pain and of languor, when the whole head is sore, and the whole heart sick. If those who rail indiscriminately at this species of composition, were to consider the quantity of actual pleasure which it produces, and the much greater proportion of real sorrow and distress which it alleviates, their philanthropy ought to moderate their critical pride, or religious intolerance.

To return to "The Mysteries of Udolpho." The author, pursuing her own favourite bent of composition, and again waving her wand over the world of wonder and imagination, had judiciously used a spell of broader and more potent command. The situation and distresses of the heroines, have here, and in "The Romance of the Forest," a general aspect of similarity. Both are divided from the object of their attachment by the gloomy influence of unfaithful and oppressive guardians, and both become inhabitants of time-stricken towers, and witnesses of scenes now bordering on the supernatural, and now upon the horrible. But this general resemblance is only such as we love to recognize in pictures which have been painted by the same hand, and as companions for each other. Everything in "The Mysteries of Udolpho" is on a larger and more sublime scale, than in "The Romance of the Forest;" the interest is of a more agitating and tremendous nature; the scenery of a wilder and more terrific description; the characters distinguished by fiercer and more gigantic features. Montoni, a lofty-souled desperado, and Captain of Condottieri, stands beside La Motte and his Marquis, like one of Milton's fiends beside a witch's familiar. Adeline is confined within a ruined manor-house, but her sister heroine, Emily, is imprisoned in a huge castle, like those of feudal times; the one is attacked and defended by bands of armed banditti, the other only threatened by a visit from constables and thief-takers. The scale of the landscape is equally different; the quiet and

limited woodland scenery of the one work forming a contrast with the splendid and high-wrought descriptions of Italian mountain-grandeur which occurs in the other.

In general, "The Mysteries of Udolpho" was, at its first appearance, considered as a step beyond Mrs. Radcliffe's former work, high as that had justly advanced her. We entertain the same opinion in again reading them both, even after some years' interval. Yet there were persons of no mean judgment to whom the simplicity of "The Romance of the Forest" seemed preferable to the more highly coloured and broader style of "The Mysteries of Udolpho;" and it must remain matter of opinion, whether their preference be better founded than in the partialities of a first love, which in literature, as in life, are often unduly predominant. With the majority of readers, the superior magnificence of landscape, and dignity of conception of character, secured the palm for the more recent work.

The fifth production by which Mrs. Radcliffe arrested the attention of the public, was fated to be her last. "The Italian," which appeared in 1790, was purchased by the booksellers for 800*l*., and obtained a share of public favour equal to any of its predecessors. Here, too, the author had, with much judgment, taken such a point of distance and distinction, that while employing her own peculiar talent, and painting in the style of which she may be considered the inventor, she cannot be charged with repeating or copying herself. She selected the new and powerful machinery afforded her by the Popish religion, when established in its paramount superiority, and thereby had at her disposal, monks, spies, dungeons, the mute obedience of the bigot, the dark and dominating spirit of the crafty priest,—all the thunders of the Vatican, and all the terrors of the Inquisition. This fortunate adoption placed in the hands of the authoress a powerful set of agents, who were at once supplied with means and motives for bringing forward scenes of horror; and thus a tinge of probability was thrown over even those parts of the story which are most inconsistent with the ordinary train of human events.

Most writers of romance have been desirous to introduce their narrative to the reader, in some manner which might at once excite interest and prepare his mind for the species of excitation which it was the author's object to produce. In "The Italian," this has been achieved by Mrs. Radcliffe with an uncommon degree of felicity, nor is there any part of the romance itself which is more striking, than its impressive commencement.

A party of English travellers visit a Neapolitan church. "Within the shade of the portico, a person with folded arms, and eyes directed towards the ground, was pacing behind the pillars the whole extent of the pavement, and was apparently so engaged by his own thoughts, as not to observe that strangers were approaching. He turned, however, suddenly, as if startled by the sound of steps, and then, without farther pausing, glided to a door that opened into the church, and disappeared.

"There was something too extraordinary in the figure of this man, and too singular in his conduct, to pass unnoticed by the visitors. He was of a tall thin figure, bending forward from the shoulders; of a sallow complexion, and harsh features, and had an eye, which, as it looked up from the cloak that muffled the lower part of his countenance, was expressive of uncommon ferocity.

"The travellers, on entering the church, looked round for the stranger, who had passed thither before them, but he was nowhere to be seen; and, through all the shade of the long aisles, only one other person appeared. This was a friar of the adjoining convent, who sometimes pointed out to strangers the objects in the church which were most worthy of attention, and who now, with this design, approached the party that had just entered.

"When the party had viewed the different shrines and whatever had been judged worthy of observation, and were returning through an obscure aisle towards the portico, they perceived the person who had appeared upon the steps, passing towards a confessional on the left, and, as he entered it, one of the party pointed him out to the friar, and inquired who he was; the friar turning to look after him, did not immediately reply, but, on the question being repeated, he inclined his head, as in a kind of obeisance, and calmly replied, 'He is an assassin.'

"'An assassin!' exclaimed one of the Englishmen; 'an assassin, and at liberty!'

"An Italian gentleman, who was one of the party, smiled at the astonishment of his friend.

"'He has sought sanctuary here,' replied the friar; 'within these walls he may not be hurt.'

"'Do your altars, then, protect a murderer?' said the Englishman.

"'He could find shelter nowhere else,' answered the friar, meekly.

* * * * *

"'But observe yonder confessional,' added the Italian, 'that beyond the pillars on the left of the aisle, below a painted window. Have you discovered it? The colours of the glass throw, instead of a light, a shade over that part of the church, which, perhaps, prevents your distinguishing what I mean.'

"The Englishman looked whither his friend pointed, and observed a confessional of oak, or some very dark wood, adjoining the wall, and remarked also, that it was the same which the assassin had just entered. It consisted of three compartments, covered with a black canopy. In the central division was the chair of the confessor, elevated by several steps above the pavement of the church; and on either hand was a small closet, or box, with steps leading up to a grated partition, at which the penitent might kneel, and, concealed from observation, pour into the ear of the confessor, the consciousness of crimes that lay heavy at his heart.

"'You observe it?' said the Italian.

"'I do,' replied the Englishman: 'it is the same which the assassin had passed into; and I think it one of the most gloomy spots I ever beheld; the view of it is enough to strike a criminal with despair!'

"'We, in Italy, are not so apt to despair,' replied the Italian, smilingly.

"'Well, but what of this confessional?' inquired the Englishman. 'The assassin entered it.'

"'He has no relation with what I am about to mention,' said the Italian; 'but I wish you to mark the place, because some very extraordinary circumstances belong to it.'

"'What are they?' said the Englishman.

"'It is now several years since the confession, which is connected with them, was made at that very confessional,' added the Italian; 'the view of it, and the sight of the assassin, with your surprise at the liberty which is allowed him, led me to a recollection of the story. When you return to the hotel, I will communicate it to you, if you have no pleasanter mode of engaging your time.'

"'After I have taken another view of this solemn edifice,' replied the Englishman, 'and particularly of the confessional you have pointed to my notice.'

"While the Englishman glanced his eye over the high roofs, and along the solemn perspectives of the Santa del Pianto, he perceived the figure of the assassin stealing from the confessional across the choir, and, shocked on again beholding him, he turned his eyes, and hastily quitted the church.

"The friends then separated, and the Englishman, soon after returning to his hotel, received the volume. He read as follows."

This introductory passage, which, for the references which it bears to the story, and the anxious curiosity it excites in the reader's mind, may be compared to the dark and vaulted gateway of an ancient castle, is followed by a tale of corresponding mystery and terror; in detailing which, the art of Mrs. Radcliffe, who was so great a mistress of throwing her narrative into mystery, affording half intimations of veiled and secret horrors, is used perhaps to the very uttermost. And yet, though our reason ultimately presents us with this criticism, we believe she generally suspends her remonstrance till the perusal is ended; and it is not until the last page is read, and the last volume closed, that we feel ourselves disposed to censure that which has so keenly interested us. We become then at length aware, that there is no uncommon merit in the general contrivance of the story; that many of the incidents are improbable, and some of the mysteries left unexplained; yet the impression of general delight which we have received from the perusal, remains unabated, for it is founded on recollection of the powerful emotions of wonder, curiosity, even fear, to which we have been subjected during the currency of the narrative.

A youth of high birth and noble estates becomes enamoured of a damsel of low fortunes, unknown race, and all that portion of beauty and talents which belongs to a heroine of romance. Their union is

opposed by his family, and chiefly by the pride of his mother, who calls to her aid the real hero of the tale, her confessor, Father Schedoni, a strongly drawn character as ever stalked through the regions of romance, equally detestable for the crimes he has formerly perpetrated, and those which he is willing to commit; formidable from his talents and energy; at once a hypocrite and a profligate, unfeeling, unrelenting, and implacable. With the aid of this agent, Vivaldi, the lover, is thrown into the dungeons of the Inquisition, while Ellena, his bride, is carried by the pitiless monk to an obscure den, where finding the services of an associate likely to foil his expectation, he resolves to murder her with his own hand. Hitherto the story, or, at least, the situation, is not altogether dissimilar from the "Mysteries of Udolpho;" but the fine scene, where the monk, in the act of raising his arm to murder his sleeping victim, discovers her to be his own child, is of a new, grand, and powerful character, and the horrors of the wretch, who, on the brink of murder, has but just escaped from committing a crime of yet more exaggerated horror, constitute the strongest painting which has been produced by Mrs. Radcliffe's pencil, and from a crisis well fitted to be actually embodied on canvas by some great master. In the prisons of the Inquisition the terrific Schedoni, is met, counterplotted, and at length convicted by the agency of a being as wicked as himself, who had once enjoyed his confidence. Several pauses of breathless suspense are thrown in, during the detail of these intrigues, by which Mrs. Radcliffe knew so well how to give interest to the work,

On reconsidering the narrative, we indeed discover that many of the incidents are imperfectly explained, and that we can distinguish points upon which the authoress had doubtless intended to lay the foundation of something which she afterwards forgot or omitted. Of the first class, is the astonishment testified by the Grand Inquisitor with such striking effect, when a strange voice was heard, even in the awful presence of that stern tribunal, to assume the task of interrogation proper to its judges. The incident itself is most impressive. As Vivaldi is blindfolded, and bound upon the rack, the voice of a mysterious agent who had repeatedly crossed his path, and always eluded his search, is heard to mingle in his examination, and strikes the whole assembly with consternation. "'Who is come amongst us?' he [the Grand Inquisitor] repeated, in a louder tone. Still no answer was returned; but again a confused murmur sounded from the tribunal, and a general consternation seemed to prevail. No person spoke with sufficient pre-eminence to be understood by Vivaldi; something extraordinary appeared to be passing, and he awaited the issue with all the patience he could command. Soon after he heard the doors opened, and the noise of persons quitting the chamber. A deep silence followed; but he was certain that the familiars were still beside him, waiting to begin their work of torture." This is all unquestionably very impressive; but no other explanation of the intruder's character is given than that he is an officer of the

Inquisition; a circumstance which may explain his being present at Vivaldi's examination, but by no means his interference with it, against the pleasure of the Grand Inquisitor. The latter certainly would neither have been surprised at the presence of one of his own officials, nor overawed by his deportment; since the one was a point of ordinary duty, and the other must have been accounted as an impertinence. It may be added also, that there is no full or satisfactory reason assigned for the fell and unpitying hostility of Zampari to Schedoni, and that the reasons which can be gathered are inadequate and trivial.

We may notice an instance of even greater negligence, in the passages respecting the ruined palace of the Barone di Cambrusca, where the imperfect tale of horror hinted at by a peasant, the guide of Schedoni, appears to jar upon the galled conscience of the monk, and induces the reader to expect a train of important consequences. Unquestionably, the ingenious authoress had meant this half-told tale to correspond with some particulars in the proposed development of the story, which having been finished more hastily, or in a different manner from what she intended, she had, like a careless knitter, neglected to take up her "loose stitches." It is, however, a baulking of the reader's imagination, which authors in this department would do well to guard against. At the same time, critics are bound in mercy to remember, how much more easy it is to devise a complicated chain of interest, than to disentangle it with perfect felicity. Dryden, it is said, used to curse the inventors of fifth acts in the drama, and romance-writers owe no blessings to the memory of him who devised explanatory chapters.

We have been told, that in this beautiful romance, the customs and rules of the Inquisition have been violated; a charge more easily made than proved, and which, if true, is of minor importance, because its code is happily but little known to us. It is matter of more obvious criticism, and therefore a greater error, that the scraps of Italian language introduced to give locality to the scene, are not happily chosen, and savour of affectation. But if Mrs. Radcliffe did not intimately understand the language and manners of Italy, the following extract may prove how well she knew how to paint Italian scenery, which she could only have seen in the pictures of Claude or Poussin.

"These excursions sometimes led to Puzzuoli, Baia, or the woody cliffs of Pausilippo; and as, on their return, they glided along the moonlight bay, the melodies of Italian strains seemed to give enchantment to the scenery of its shore. At this cool hour the voices of the vine-dressers were frequently heard in trio, as they reposed, after the labour of the day, on some pleasant promontory, under the shade of poplars; or the brisk music of the dance from fishermen, on the margin of the waves below. The boatmen rested on their oars, while their company listened to voices modulated by sensibility to finer eloquence, than it is in the power of art alone to display; and at

others, while they observed the airy natural grace, which distinguishes the dance of the fishermen and peasant girls of Naples. Frequently, as they glided round a promontory, whose shaggy masses impended far over the sea, such magic scenes of beauty unfolded, adorned by these dancing groups on the bay beyond, as no pencil could do justice to. The deep clear waters reflected every image of the landscape; the cliffs, branching into wild forms, crowned with groves, whose rough foliage often spread down their steeps in picturesque luxuriance; the ruined villa, on some bold point, peeping through the trees; peasants' cabins hanging on the precipices, and the dancing figures on the strand—all touched with the silvery tint and soft shadows of moonlight. On the other hand, the sea, trembling with a long line of radiance, and showing in the clear distance the sails of vessels stealing in every direction along its surface, presented a prospect as grand as the landscape was beautiful." There are other descriptive passages, which, like those in "The Mysteries of Udolpho," approach more nearly to the style of Salvator Rosa.

The "Italian" was received with as much ardour as Mrs. Radcliffe's two previous novels, and it was from no coldness on the part of the public, that, like an actress in full possession of applauded powers, she chose to retreat from the stage in the blaze of her fame. After publication of "The Italian," in 1797, the public were not favoured with any more of Mrs. Radcliffe's publications.

We are left in vain to conjecture the reasons, which, for more than twenty years, condemned an imagination so fertile, so far as the public were concerned, to sterility. The voice of unfriendly criticism, always as sure an attendant upon merit as envy herself, may perhaps have intimidated the gentleness of her character; or Mrs. Radcliffe, as frequently happens, may have been disgusted at seeing the mode of composition, which she had brought into fashion, profaned by the host of servile imitators, who could only copy and render more prominent her defects, without aspiring to her merits. But so steadily did she keep her resolution, that for more than twenty years the name of Mrs. Radcliffe was never mentioned, unless with reference to her former productions, and in general (so retired was the current of her life) there was a belief that Fate had removed her from the scene.

Notwithstanding her refraining from publication, it is impossible to believe that an imagination so strong, supported by such ready powers of expression, should have remained inactive during so long a period; but the manuscripts on which she was occasionally employed have as yet been withheld from the public. We have reason to believe, that arrangements were at one time almost concluded between Mrs. Radcliffe and a highly respectable publishing-house, respecting a poetical romance, but were broken off in consequence of the author changing or delaying her intention of publication. It is to be hoped, that the world will not be ultimately deprived of what undoubtedly must be the source of much pleasure whenever it shall see the light.

The tenor of Mrs. Radcliffe's private life seems to have been

peculiarly calm and sequestered. She probably declined the sort of personal notoriety, which, in London society, usually attaches to persons of literary merit; and perhaps no author whose works were so universally read and admired, was so little personally known even to the most active of that class of people of distinction, who rest their peculiar pretensions to fashion upon the selection of literary society. Her estate was certainly not the less gracious; and it did not disturb Mrs. Radcliffe's domestic comforts, although many of her admirers believed, and some are yet not undeceived, that, in consequence of brooding over the terrors which she depicted, her reason had at length been overturned, and that the author of "The Mysteries of Udolpho" only existed as the melancholy inmate of a private madhouse. This report was so generally spread, and so confidently repeated in print, as well as in conversation, that the writer believed it for several years, until, greatly to his satisfaction, he learned from good authority that there neither was, nor ever had been, the most distant foundation for this unpleasing rumour.

A false report of another kind gave Mrs. Radcliffe much concern. In Miss Seward's Correspondence, among the literary gossip of the day, it is roundly stated, that the "Plays upon the Passions" were Mrs. Radcliffe's, and that she owned them. Mrs. Radcliffe was much hurt at being reported capable of borrowing from the fame of a gifted sister; and the late Miss Seward would probably have suffered equally, had she been aware of the pain she inflicted by giving currency to a rumour so totally unfounded. The truth is, that, residing at a distance from the metropolis, and living upon literary intelligence as her daily food, Miss Seward was sometimes imposed upon by those friendly caterers, who were more anxious to supply her with the newest intelligence, than solicitous about its accuracy.

During the last twelve years of her life, Mrs. Radcliffe suffered from a spasmodic asthma, which considerably affected her general health and spirits. This chronic disorder took a more fatal turn upon the 9th of January, 1822, and upon the 7th of February following, terminated the life of this ingenious and amiable lady, at her own house in London.

MRS. RADCLIFFE, as an author, has the most decided claim to take her place among the favoured few, who have been distinguished as the founders of a class, or school. She led the way in a peculiar style of composition, affecting powerfully the mind of the reader, which has since been attempted by many, but in which no one has attained or approached the excellences of the original inventor, unless perhaps the author of "The Family of Montorio."

The species of romance which Mrs. Radcliffe introduced, bears nearly the same relation to the novel that the modern anomaly entitled a melo-drame does to the proper drama. It does not appeal to the judgment by deep delineations of human feeling, or stir the passions by scenes of deep pathos, or awaken the fancy by tracing

out, with spirit and vivacity, the lighter traces of life and manners, or excite mirth by strong representations of the ludicrous or humorous. In other words, it attains its interest neither by the path of comedy nor of tragedy; and yet it has, notwithstanding, a deep, decided, and powerful effect, gained by means independent of both—by an appeal, in one word, to the passion of fear, whether excited by natural dangers, or by the suggestions of superstition. The force, therefore, of the production, lies in the delineation of external incident, while the characters of the agents, like the figures in many landscapes, are entirely subordinate to the scenes in which they are placed; and are only distinguished by such outlines as make them seem appropriate to the rocks and trees, which have been the artist's principal objects. The persons introduced,—and here also the correspondence holds betwixt the melo-drame and the romantic novel,—bear the features, not of individuals, but of the class to which they belong. A dark and tyrannical count; an aged crone of a housekeeper, the depositary of many a family legend; a garrulous waiting-maid; a gay and light-hearted valet; a villain or two of all-work; and a heroine, fulfilled with all perfections, and subjected to all manner of hazards, form the stock-in-trade of a romancer or a melo-dramatist; and if these personages be dressed in the proper costume, and converse in language sufficiently appropriate to their stations and qualities, it is not expected that the audience shall shake their sides at the humour of the dialogue, or weep over its pathos.

On the other hand, it is necessary that these characters, though not delineated with individual features, should be truly and forcibly sketched in the outline; that their dress and general appearance should correspond with and support the trick of the scene; and that their language and demeanour should either enhance the terrors amongst which they move, or form, as the action may demand, a strong and vivid contrast to them. Mrs. Radcliffe's powers of fancy were particularly happy in depicting such personages, in throwing upon them and their actions just enough of that dubious light which mystery requires, and in supplying them with language and manners which correspond with their situation and business upon the scene. We may take, as an example, the admirable description of the monk Schedoni.—"His figure was striking, but not so from grace; it was tall, and, though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth, and as he stalked along, wrapped in the black garments of his order, there was something terrible in his air; something almost superhuman. His cowl, too, as it threw a shade over the livid paleness of his face, increased its severe character, and gave an effect to his large melancholy eye, which approached to horror. His was not the melancholy of a sensible and wounded heart, but apparently that of a gloomy and ferocious disposition. There was something in his phsiognomy extremely singular, and that cannot easily be defined. It bore the traces of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated. An habitual gloom and severity

prevailed over the deep lines of his countenance; and his eyes were so piercing, that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts; few persons could support their scrutiny, or even endure to meet them twice. Yet, notwithstanding all this gloom and austerity, some rare occasions of interest had called forth a character upon his countenance entirely different; and he could adapt himself to the tempers and passions of persons whom he wished to conciliate with astonishing facility, and generally with complete triumph. This monk, this Schedoni, was the confessor and secret adviser of the Marchesa di Vivaldi."

To draw such portraits as Schedoni's, and others which occur in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, requires no mean powers; and although they belong rather to romance than to real life, the impression which they make upon the imagination is scarce lessened by the sense that they are in some sort as fabulous as fairies or ogres. But when the public have been surprised into an universal burst of applause, it is their custom to indemnify themselves by a corresponding degree of censure; just as children, when tired of admiring a new plaything, find a fresh and distinct pleasure in breaking it to pieces. Mrs. Radcliffe, who had afforded such general delight to the public, was not doomed to escape the common fate; and the criticism with which she was assailed, was the more invidious that it was inflicted, in more than one case, by persons of genius, who followed the same pursuit with herself. It was the cry at the period, and has sometimes been repeated since, that the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe, and the applause with which they were received, were evil signs of the times, and argued a great and increasing degradation of the public taste, which, instead of banqueting as heretofore upon scenes of passion, like those of Richardson, or of life and manners, as in the pages of Smollett and Fielding, was now coming back to the fare of the nursery, and gorged upon the wild and improbable fictions of an overheated imagination. There might be some truth in this, if it were only applied to the crowd of copyists who came forward in imitation of Mrs. Radcliffe, and assumed her magic wand, without having the power of wielding it with effect. No author can be arraigned for the deficiencies of those who servilely copy his style, and, following their original as the shadow follows the substance, present an obscure, distorted, and indistinct outline of what is in itself clear, precise, and distinct. But the inferiority of this servile race is much more likely to put the particular style they imitate out of fashion, than to engraft its peculiarities upon the public taste.

When applied to Mrs. Radcliffe herself, the tone of criticism which we allude to will, when justly examined, be found to rest chiefly on that depreciating spirit, which would undermine the fair fame of an accomplished writer, by showing that she does not possess the excellences proper to a style of composition totally different from that which she has attempted. The question is neither, whether the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe possess merits which her plan did not require, nay, almost excluded; nor whether hers is to be considered

as a department of fictitious composition, equal in dignity and importance to those where the great ancient masters have long preoccupied the ground. The real and only point is, whether, considered as a separate and distinct species of writing, that introduced by Mrs. Radcliffe possesses merit, and affords pleasure; for, these premises being admitted, it is as unreasonable to complain of the absence of advantages foreign to her style and plan, and proper to those of another mode of composition, as to regret that the peach-tree does not produce grapes, or the vine peaches. A glance upon the face of nature is, perhaps, the best cure for this unjust and unworthy system of criticism. We there behold, that not only each star differs from another in glory, but that there is spread over the face of Nature a boundless variety; and that as a thousand different kinds of shrubs and flowers not only have beauties independent of each other, but are more delightful from that very circumstance than if they were uniform, so the fields of literature admit the same variety; and it may be said of the Muse of Fiction, as well as of her sisters,

Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.

It may be stated, to the additional confusion of such hypercritics as we allude to, that not only does the infinite variety of human tastes require different styles of composition for their gratification; but if there were to be selected one particular structure of fiction, which possesses charms for the learned and unlearned, the grave and gay, the gentleman and the clown, it would be perhaps that of those very romances which the severity of their criticism seeks to depreciate. There are many men too mercurial to be delighted by Richardson's beautiful, but protracted display of the passions; and there are some too dull to comprehend the wit of Le Sage, or too saturnine to relish the nature and spirit of Fielding: And yet these very individuals will with difficulty be divorced from "The Romance of the Forest," or "The Mysteries of Udolpho;" for curiosity and a lurking love of mystery, together with a germ of superstition, are more general ingredients in the human mind, and more widely diffused through the mass of humanity, than either genuine taste for the comic, or true feeling of the pathetic. The unknown author of "The Pursuits of Literature," who, in respect to common tales of terror,

boasts an English heart,
Unused at ghosts or rattling bones to start,

acknowledges, nevertheless, the legitimate character of Mrs. Radcliffe's art, and pays no mean tribute to her skill. Of some sister novelists he talks with slight regard. "Though all of them are ingenious ladies, yet they are too frequently whining and frisking in novels, till our girls' heads turn wild with impossible adventures; and now and then are tainted with democracy. Not so the mighty magician of 'The Mysteries of Udolpho,' bred and nourished by the Florentine

muses in their secret solitary caverns, amid the paler shrines of Gothic superstition, and in all the dreariness of enchantment; a poetess whom Ariosto would with rapture have acknowledged, as,

> La nudrita
> Damigella Trivulzia al sacro speco.—O. F. c. xlvi."

Mrs Radcliffe was not made acquainted with this high compliment till long after the satire was published; and its value was enhanced by the author's general severity of judgment, and by his perfect acquaintance with the manners and language of Italy, in which she had laid her scene.

It is further to be observed, that the same class of critics who ridiculed these romances as unnatural and improbable, were disposed to detract from the genius of the author, on account of the supposed facility of her task. Art or talent, they said, was not required to produce that sort of interest and emotion, which is perhaps, after all, more strongly excited by a vulgar legend of a village ghost, than by the high painting and laboured descriptions of Mrs. Radcliffe. But this criticism is not much better founded than the former. The feelings of suspense and awful attention which she excites, are awakened by means of springs which lie open indeed to the first touch, but which are peculiarly liable to be worn out by repeated pressure. The public soon, like Macbeth, become satiated with horrors, and indifferent to the strongest *stimuli* of that kind. It shows, therefore, the excellence and power of Mrs. Radcliffe's genius, that she was able three times to bring back her readers with fresh appetite to a banquet of the same description; while of her numerous imitators, who rang the changes upon old castles and forests, and "antres dire," scarcely one attracted attention, until Mr. Lewis published his "Monk," several years after she had resigned her pen.

The materials of these celebrated romances and the means employed in conducting the narrative, are all selected with a view to the author's primary object, of moving the reader by ideas of impending danger, hidden guilt, supernatural visitings,—by all that is terrible, in short, combined with much that is wonderful. For this purpose, her scenery is generally as gloomy as her tale, and her personages are those at whose frown that gloom grows darker. She has uniformly selected the south of Europe for her place of action, whose passions, like the weeds of the climate, are supposed to attain portentous growth under the fostering sun; which abounds with ruined monuments of antiquity, as well as the more massive remnants of the Middle Ages; and where feudal tyranny and Catholic superstition still continue to exercise their sway over the slave and bigot, and to indulge to the haughty lord, or more haughty priest, that sort of despotic power, the exercise of which seldom fails to deprave the heart, and disorder the judgment. These circumstances are skilfully selected, to give probability to events which could not, without great violation of truth, be represented as having taken place in England. Yet, even with the

allowances which we make for foreign minds and manners, the unterminating succession of misfortunes which press upon the heroine, strikes us as unnatural. She is continually struggling with the tide of adversity, and hurried downwards by its torrent; and if any more gay description is occasionally introduced, it is only as a contrast, and not a relief to themelancholy and gloomy tenor of the narrative.

In working upon the sensations of natural and superstitious fear, Mrs. Radcliffe has made much use of obscurity and suspense, the most fertile source, perhaps, of sublime emotion; for there are few dangers that do not become familiar to the firm mind, if they are presented to consideration as certainties and in all their open and declared character; whilst, on the other hand, the bravest have shrunk from the dark and doubtful. To break off the narrative, when it seemed at the point of becoming most interesting—to extinguish a lamp just when a parchment containing some hideous secret ought to have been read—to exhibit shadowy forms and half-heard sounds of woe, are resources which Mrs. Radcliffe has employed with more effect than any other writer of romance. It must be confessed, that, in order to bring about these situations, some art or contrivance, on the part of the author, is rather too visible. Her heroines voluntarily expose themselves to situations, which in nature a lonely female would have avoided. They are too apt to choose the midnight hour for investigating the mysteries of a deserted chamber or secret passage, and generally are only supplied with an expiring lamp, when about to read the most interesting documents. The simplicity of the tale is thus somewhat injured—it is as if we witnessed a dressing up of the very phantom by which we are to be startled; and the imperfection, though redeemed by many beauties, did not escape the censure of criticism.

A principal characteristic of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, is the rule which the author imposed upon herself, that all the circumstances of her narrative, however mysterious, and apparently superhuman, were to be accounted for on natural principles, at the winding up of the story. It must be allowed, that this has not been done with uniform success, and that the author has been occasionally more successful in exciting interest and apprehensions, than in giving either interest or dignity of explanation to the means she has made use of. Indeed, we have already noticed, as the torment of romance-writers, those necessary evils, the concluding chapters, when they must unravel the skein of adventures which they have been so industrious to perplex, and account for all the incidents which they have been at so much pains to render unaccountable. Were these great magicians, who deal in the wonderful and fearful, permitted to dismiss their spectres as they raise them, amidst the shadowy and indistinct light so favourable to the exhibition of phantasmagoria, without compelling them into broad daylight, the task were comparatively easy, and the fine fragment of Sir Bertrand might have rivals in that department. But the modern

author is not permitted to escape in that way. We are told of a formal old judge before whom evidence was tendered of the ghost of a murdered person having declared to a witness, that the prisoner at the bar was guilty: the judge admitted the evidence of the spirit to be excellent, but denied his right to be heard through the mouth of another, and ordered the spectre to be summoned into open court. The public of the current day deal as rigidly in moving for a *quo warranto* to compel an explanation from the story-teller; and the author must either at once represent the knot as worthy of being severed by supernatural aid, and bring on the stage his actual fiend or ghost, or, like Mrs. Radcliffe, explain by natural agency the whole marvels of his story.

We have already, in some brief remarks on "The Castle of Otranto," avowed some preference for the more simple mode, of boldly avowing the use of supernatural machinery. Ghosts and witches, and the whole tenets of superstition, having once, and at no late period, been matter of universal belief, warranted by legal authority, it would seem no great stretch upon the reader's credulity to require him, while reading of what his ancestors did, to credit for the time what those ancestors devoutly believed in. And yet, notwithstanding the success of Walpole and Maturin, (to whom we may add the author of "Forman,") the management of such machinery must be acknowledged a task of a most delicate nature. "There is but one step," said Bonaparte, "betwixt the sublime and the ridiculous;" and in an age of universal incredulity, we must own it would require, at the present day, the support of the highest powers, to save the supernatural from slipping into the ludicrous. The *Incredulus odi* is a formidable objection.

There are some modern authors, indeed, who have endeavoured, ingeniously enough, to compound betwixt ancient faith and modern incredulity. They have exhibited phantoms, and narrated prophecies strangely accomplished, without giving a defined or absolute opinion, whether these are to be referred to supernatural agency, or whether the apparitions were produced (no uncommon case) by an overheated imagination, and the presages apparently verified by a casual, though singular, coincidence of circumstances. This is, however, an evasion of the difficulty, not a solution; and besides, it would be leading us too far from the present subject, to consider to what point the author of a fictitious narrative is bound by his charter to gratify the curiosity of the public, and whether, as a painter of actual life, he is not entitled to leave something in shade, when the natural course of events conceals so many incidents in total darkness. Perhaps, upon the whole, this is the most artful mode of terminating such a tale of wonder, as it forms the means of compounding with the taste of two different classes of readers; those who, like children, demand that each particular circumstance and incident of the narrative shall be fully accounted for; and the more imaginative class, who, resembling men

that walk for pleasure through a moonlight landscape, are more teazed than edified by the intrusive minuteness with which some well-meaning companion disturbs their reveries, divesting stock and stone of the shadowy semblances in which fancy had dressed them, and pertinaciously restoring to them the ordinary forms and commonplace meanness of reality.

It may indeed be claimed as meritorious in Mrs. Radcliffe's mode of expounding her mysteries, that it is founded in possibilities. Many situations have occurred, highly tinctured with romantic incident and feeling, the mysterious obscurity of which has afterwards been explained by deception and confederacy. Such have been the impostures of superstition in all ages, and such delusions were also practised by the members of the Secret Tribunal in the Middle Ages, and in more modern times by the Rosicrucians and Illuminati, upon whose machinations Schiller has founded the fine romance of "The Ghost-Seer." But Mrs. Radcliffe has not had recourse to so artificial a solution. Her heroines often sustain the agony of fear, and her readers that of suspense, from incidents which, when explained, appear of an ordinary and trivial nature; and in this we do not greatly applaud her art. A stealthy step behind the arras, may doubtless, in some situations, and when the nerves are tuned to a certain pitch, have no small influence upon the imagination; but if the conscious listener discovers it to be only the noise made by the cat, the solemnity of the feeling is gone, and the visionary is at once angry with his senses for having been cheated, and with his reason for having acquiesced in the deception.* We fear that some such feeling of disappointment and displeasure attends most readers, when they read for the first time the unsatisfactory solution of the mysteries of the black pall and the wax figure, which has been adjourned from chapter to chapter, like something suppressed, because too horrible for the ear.

There is a separate inconvenience attending a narrative where the imagination has been long kept in suspense, and is at length imperfectly gratified by an explanation falling short of what the reader has expected; for, in such a case, the interest terminates on the first reading of the volumes, and cannot, so far as it rests upon a high degree of excitation, be recalled upon a second perusal. A plan or narrative, happily complicated and ingeniously resolved, continues to please after many readings; for, although the interest of eager curiosity is no more, it is supplied by the rational pleasure, which admires the author's art, and traces a thousand minute passages, which render the catastrophe probable, yet escape notice in the eagerness of a first perusal. But it is otherwise, when some inadequate cause is assigned for a strong emotion; the reader feels tricked, and as in the case of a child who

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* By a singular coincidence, the late lamented author of "Don Juan" has introduced this very idea into the last canto of that poem.

has once seen the scenes of a theatre too nearly, the idea of pasteboard, cords, and pulleys, destroys for ever the illusion with which they were first seen from the proper point of view. Such are the difficulties and dilemmas which attend the path of the professed story-teller, who, while it is expected of him that his narrative should be interesting and extraordinary, is neither permitted to explain its wonders, by referring them to ordinary causes, on account of their triteness, nor to supernatural agency, because of its incredibility. It is no wonder that, hemmed in by rules so strict, Mrs. Radcliffe, a mistress of the art of exciting curiosity, has not been uniformly fortunate in the mode of gratifying it.

The best and most admired specimen of her art is the mysterious disappearance of Ludovico after having undertaken to watch for a night in a haunted apartment; and the mind of the reader is finely wound up for some strange catastrophe by the admirable ghost story which he is represented as perusing to amuse his solitude, as the scene closes upon him. Neither can it be denied that the explanation afforded of this mysterious incident is as probable as romance requires, and in itself completely satisfactory. As this is perhaps the most favourable example of Mrs. Radcliffe's peculiar skill in composition, the incidents of the black veil and the waxen figure may be considered as instances where the explanation falls short of expectation and disappoints the reader entirely. On the other hand, her art is at once, according to the classical precept, exerted and concealed in the beautiful and impressive passage where the Marchesa is in the choir of the convent of San Nicolo, contriving with the atrocious Schedoni the murder of Ellena.

"'Avoid violence, if that be possible,' she added, immediately comprehending him, 'but let her die quickly! The punishment is due to the crime.'

"The Marchesa happened, as she said this, to cast her eyes upon the inscription over a confessional, where appeared, in black letters, these awful words, 'God *hears thee!*' It appeared an awful warning; her countenance changed; it had struck upon her heart. Schedoni was too much engaged by his own thoughts to observe or understand her silence. She soon recovered herself; and, considering that this was a common inscription for confessionals, disregarded what she had at first considered as a peculiar admonition; yet some moments elapsed before she could renew the subject.

"'You were speaking of a place, father,' resumed the Marchesa—'you mentioned a——'

"'Ay,' muttered the confessor, still musing—'in a chamber of that house there is——'

"'What noise is that?' said the Marchesa, interrupting him. They listened. A few low and querulous notes of the organ sounded at a distance, and stopped again.

"'What mournful music is that?' said the Marchesa, in a faltering

voice; 'it was touched by a fearful hand! Vespers were over long ago?'

"'Daughter,' said Schedoni somewhat sternly, 'you said you had a man's courage. Alas! you have a woman's heart.'

"'Excuse me, father; I know not why I feel this agitation, but I will command it.—That chamber?'

"'In that chamber,' resumed the confessor, 'is a secret door, constructed long ago.'

"'And for what purpose constructed?" said the fearful Marchesa.

"'Pardon me, daughter; 'tis sufficient that it is there; we will make a good use of it. Through that door—in the night—when she sleeps——'

"'I comprehend you,' said the Marchesa, 'I comprehend you. But why—you have your reasons, no doubt—but why the necessity of a secret door in a house which you say is so lonely—inhabited by only one person?'

"'A passage leads to the sea,' continued Schedoni, without replying to the question. 'There, on the shore, when darkness covers it—there, plunged amidst the waves, no stain shall hint of——'

"'Hark!' interrupted the Marchesa, starting, 'that note again!'

"The organ sounded faintly from the choir, and paused, as before. In the next moment, a slow chanting of voices was heard, mingling with the rising peal, in a strain particularly melancholy and solemn.

"'Who is dead?' said the Marchesa, changing countenance; 'it is a requiem!'

"'Peace be with the departed!' exclaimed Schedoni, and crossed himself; 'peace rest with his soul!'

"'Hark! to that chant,' said the Marchesa, in a trembling voice; 'it is a first requiem; the soul has but just quitted the body!'

"They listened in silence. The Marchesa was much affected; her complexion varied at every instant; her breathings were short and interrupted, and she even shed a few tears, but they were those of despair rather than of sorrow."

Mrs. Radcliffe's powers, both of language and description, have been justly estimated very highly. They bear, at the same time, considerable marks of that warm, and somewhat exuberant imagination, which dictated her works. Some artists are distinguished by precision and correctness of outline, others by the force and vividness of their colouring; and it is to the latter class that this author belongs. The landscapes of Mrs. Radcliffe are far from equal in accuracy and truth to those of her contemporary, Mrs. Charlotte Smith, whose sketches are so very graphical that an artist would find little difficulty in actually painting from them. Those of Mrs. Radcliffe, on the contrary, while they would supply the most noble and vigorous ideas for producing a general effect, would leave the task of tracing a distinct and accurate outline to the imagination of the painter. As her story is usually enveloped in mystery, so there is, as it were, a haze over her

landscapes, softening indeed the whole, and adding interest and dignity to particular parts, and thereby producing every effect which the author desired, but without communicating any absolutely precise or individual image to the reader. The beautiful description of the Castle of Udolpho, upon Emily's first approach to it, is of this character. It affords a noble subject for the pencil: but were six artists to attempt to embody it upon canvas, they would probably produce six drawings entirely dissimilar to each other, yet all of them equally authorized by the printed description, which, although a long one, is so beautiful a specimen of Mrs. Radcliffe's peculiar talents that we do not hesitate to insert it.

"Towards the close of the day, the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east a vista opened, and exhibited the Apennines in their darkest horrors; and the long perspective of retiring summits rising over each other, their ridges clothed with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley, but his sloping rays, shooting through an opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam the summits of the forest that hung upon the opposite steeps, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illumined objects was heightened by the contrasted shade which involved the valley below.

"'There,' said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, 'is Udolpho.'

"Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle, which she understood to be Montoni's; for, though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the Gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed, the light died away on the walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper as the thin vapour crept up the mountain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. From those, too, the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity, and Emily continued to gaze, till its clustering towers were alone seen rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose thick shade the carriages soon after began to ascend.

"The extent and darkness of these tall woods awakened terrific images in her mind, and she almost expected to see banditti start up from under the trees. At length the carriages emerged upon a heathy rock, and soon after reached the castle gates, where the deep tone of the portal bell, which was struck upon to give notice of their arrival,

increased the fearful emotions that had assailed Emily. While they waited till the servant within should come to open the gates, she anxiously surveyed the edifice; but the gloom that overspread it, allowed her to distinguish little more than a part of its outline, with the massy walls of the ramparts, and to know that it was vast, ancient, and dreary. From the parts she saw, she judged of the heavy strength and extent of the whole. The gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers, crowned by overhanging turrets, embattled, where, instead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants, that had taken root among the mouldering stones, and which seemed to sigh, as the breeze rolled past, over the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain, pierced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of a huge portcullis, surmounting the gates: from these the walls of the ramparts extended to other towers overlooking the precipice, whose shattered outline, appearing on a gleam that lingered in the west, told of the ravages of war.—Beyond these all was lost in the obscurity of evening."

We think it interesting to compare this splendid and beautiful fancy-picture with the precision displayed by the same author's pencil, when she was actually engaged in copying nature, and probably the reader will be of opinion that "Udolpho" is an exquisite effect-piece, "Hardwick" a striking and faithful portrait.

"Northward, beyond London, we may make one stop, after a country, not otherwise necessary to be noticed, to mention Hardwick, in Derbyshire, a seat of the Duke of Devonshire, once the residence of the Earl of Shrewsbury, to whom Elizabeth deputed the custody of the unfortunate Mary. It stands on an easy height, a few miles to the left of the road from Mansfield to Chesterfield, and is approached through shady lanes, which conceal the view of it, till you are on the confines of the park. Three towers of hoary grey then rise with great majesty among old woods, and their summits appear to be covered with the lightly shivered fragments of battlements, which, however, are soon discovered to be perfectly carved open work, in which the letters E.S. frequently occur under a coronet, the initials and the memorials of the vanity of Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, who built the present edifice. Its tall features, of a most picturesque tint, were finely disclosed between the luxuriant woods and over the lawns of the park, which every now and then let in a glimpse of the Derbyshire hills. The scenery reminded us of the exquisite descriptions of Harewood.

"The deep embowering shades that veil Elfrida, and those of Hardwick, once veiled a form as lovely as the ideal graces of the poet, and conspired to a fate more tragical than that which Harewood witnessed.

"In front of the great gates of the castle court, the ground adorned by old oaks, suddenly sinks to a darkly shadowed glade, and the view opens over the vale of Scarsdale, bounded by the wild mountains of the

Peak. Immediately to the left of the present residence, some ruined features of the ancient one, enwreathed with the rich drapery of ivy, give an interest to the scene, which the later, but more historical structure, heightens and prolongs. We followed, not without emotion, the walk which Mary had so often trodden, to the folding-doors of the great hall, whose lofty grandeur, aided by silence, and seen under the influence of a lowering sky, suited the temper of the whole scene. The tall windows, which half subdue the light they admit, just allowed us to distinguish the large figures in the tapestry above the oak wainscoting, and showed a colonnade of oak supporting a gallery along the bottom of the hall, with a pair of gigantic elk's horns flourishing between the windows opposite to the entrance. The scene of Mary's arrival, and her feelings upon entering this solemn shade, came involuntarily to the mind; the noise of horses' feet, and many voices from the court; her proud, yet gentle and melancholy look, as, led by my Lord Keeper, she passed slowly up the hall; his somewhat obsequious, yet jealous and vigilant air, while, awed by her dignity and beauty, he remembers the terrors of his own queen; the silence and anxiety of her maids, and the bustle of the surrounding attendants.

"From the hall, a staircase ascends to the gallery of a small chapel, in which the chairs and cushions used by Mary still remain, and proceeds to the first story, where only one apartment bears memorials of her imprisonment, the bed, tapestry, and chairs having been worked by herself. This tapestry is richly embossed with emblematic figures, each with its title worked above it, and, having been scrupulously preserved, is still entire and fresh.

"Over the chimney of an adjoining dining-room, to which, as well as to other apartments on this floor, some modern furniture has been added, is this motto carved in oak:—

"'There is only this: To fear God, and keep his Commandments.' So much less valuable was timber than workmanship when this mansion was constructed, that, where the staircases are not of stone, they are formed of solid oaken steps, instead of planks; such is that from the second, or State story, to the roof, whence on clear days York and Lincoln Cathedrals are said to be included in the extensive prospect. This second floor is that which gives its chief interest to the edifice. Nearly all the apartments of it were allotted to Mary; some of them for State purposes; and the furniture is known by other proof than its appearance to remain as she left it. The chief room, or that of audience, is of uncommon loftiness, and strikes by its grandeur, before the veneration and tenderness arise, which its antiquities and the plainly told tale of the sufferings they witnessed, excite."*

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* Journey through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany, with a Return down the Rhine. To which are added, Observations during a Tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland. By Ann Radcliffe.

The contrast of these two descriptions will satisfy the reader, that Mrs. Radcliffe knew as well how to copy nature as when to indulge imagination. The towers of Udolpho are undefined, boundless, and wreathed in mist and obscurity; the ruins of Hardwick are as fully and boldly painted, but with more exactness of outline, and perhaps less warmth and magnificence of colouring.

It is singular that though Mrs. Radcliffe's beautiful descriptions of foreign scenery, composed solely from the materials afforded by travellers, collected and embodied by her own genius, were marked in a particular degree (to our thinking at least) with the characteristics of fancy portraits; yet many of her contemporaries conceived them to be exact descriptions of scenes which she had visited in person. One report, transmitted to the public by the *Edinburgh Review*, stated that Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe had visited Italy; that Mr. Radcliffe had been attached to one of the British Embassies in that country; and that it was there his gifted consort imbibed the taste for picturesque scenery, for mouldering ruins, and for the obscure and gloomy anecdotes which tradition relates of their former inhabitants. This is so far a mistake, as Mrs. Radcliffe was never in Italy; but we have already mentioned the probability of her having availed herself of the acquaintance she formed in 1793 with the magnificent scenery on the banks of the Rhine, and the frowning remains of feudal castles with which it abounds. The inaccuracy of the reviewer is of no great consequence; but a more absurd report found its way into print, that Mrs. Radcliffe, namely, having visited the fine old Gothic mansion of Haddon House, had insisted upon remaining a night there, in the course of which she had been inspired with all that enthusiasm for Gothic residences, hidden passages, and mouldering walls, which mark her writings. Mrs. Radcliffe, we are assured, never saw Haddon House; and although it was a place excellently worth her attention, and could hardly have been seen by her without suggesting some of those ideas in which her imagination naturally revelled, yet we should suppose the mechanical aid to invention—the recipe for fine writing—the sleeping in a dismantled and unfurnished old house, was likely to be rewarded with nothing but a cold, and was an affectation of enthusiasm to which Mrs. Radcliffe would have disdained to have recourse.

The warmth of imagination which Mrs. Radcliffe manifests, was naturally connected with an inclination towards poetry, and accordingly songs, sonnets, and pieces of fugitive verse, amuse and relieve the reader in the course of her volumes. These are not, in this place, the legitimate subject of criticism; but it may be remarked, that they display more liveliness and richness of fancy, than correctness of taste, or felicity of expression. The language does not become pliant in Mrs. Radcliffe's hands; and, unconscious of this defect, she has attempted, nevertheless, to bend it into new structures of verse, for which the English is not adapted. The song of the glow-worm is an

experiment of this nature. It must also be allowed, that the imagination of the author sometimes carries her on too fast, and that if she herself formed a competent and perfect idea of what she meant to express, she has sometimes failed to convey it to the reader. At other and happier times her poetry partakes of the rich and beautiful colouring which distinguishes her prose composition, and has, perhaps the same fault, of not being in every case quite precise in expressing the meaning of the author. The following address to "Melancholy" may be fairly selected as a specimen of her powers:—

Spirit of love and sorrow—hail!
  Thy solemn voice from far I hear,
Mingling with evening's dying gale;
  Hail with this sadly-pleasing tear!

O! at this still, this lonely hour,
  Thine own sweet hour of closing day,
Awake thy lute, whose charmful power
  Shall call up fancy to obey;

To paint the wild romantic dream,
  That meets the poet's musing eye,
As on the bank of shadowy stream
  He breathes to her the fervid sigh.

O lonely spirit! let thy song
  Lead me through all thy sacred haunt;
The minster's moonlight aisles along,
  Where spectres raise the midnight chaunt.

I hear their dirges faintly swell!
  Then, sink at once in silence drear,
While from the pillar'd cloister's cell,
  Dimly their gliding forms appear!

Lead where the pine-woods wave on high,
  Whose pathless sod is darkly seen,
As the cold moon, with trembling eye,
  Darts her long beams the leaves between.

Lead to the mountain's dusky head,
  Where, far below, in shades profound,
Wide forests, plains, and hamlets spread,
  And sad the chimes of vesper sound.

Or guide me where the dashing oar
  Just breaks the stillness of the vale,
As slow it tracks the winding shore,
  To meet the ocean's distant sail;

To pebbly banks that Neptune laves,
  With measured surges, loud and deep,
Where the dark cliff bends o'er the waves,
  And wild the winds of autumn sweep.

There pause at midnight's spectred hour,
And list the long-resounding gale;
And catch the fleeting moonlight's power,
O'er foaming seas and distant sail.

It cannot, we think, be denied, that we have here beautiful ideas expressed in appropriate versification; yet here, as in her prose compositions, the poetess is too much busied with external objects, too anxious to describe the outward accompaniments of melancholy to write upon the feeling itself; and although the comparison be made at the expense of a favourite author, we cannot help contrasting the poetry we have just inserted, with a song by Fletcher on a similar subject.

PAS. (*Sings.*) Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly!
There's nought in this life sweet,
If man were wise to see't,
But only melancholy!

Welcome folded arms, and fixed eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that's fasten'd to the ground,
A tongue chain'd up without a sound!
Fountain heads, and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves!
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly housed, save bats and owls!
A midnight bell, a parting groan!
These are the sounds we feed upon;
Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley,
Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.

The Nice Valour.

In these last verses the reader may observe, that the human feeling of the votary of Melancholy, or rather the pale passion itself, is predominant; that our thoughts are of and with the pensive wanderer; and that the "fountain heads and pathless groves," like the landscape in a portrait, are only secondary parts of the picture. In Mrs. Radcliffe's verses it is different. The accessaries and accompaniments of melancholy are well described, but they call for so much of our attention, that the feeling itself scarce solicits due regard. We are placed among melancholy objects, but our sadness is reflected from the scene, it is not the growth of our own minds. Something like this may be observed in Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, where our curiosity is too much interested about the evolution of the story, to permit our feelings to be acted upon by the distresses of the hero or heroine. We do not acknowledge them as personal objects of our interest, and convinced that the authoress will extricate them from their embarrassments, we are more concerned about the course of the story than the feelings or fate of those of whom it is told.

But we must not take farewell of a favourite author with a depreciating sentiment. It may be true that Mrs. Radcliffe rather walks in fairyland than in the region of realities, and that she has neither displayed the command of the human passions, nor the insight into the human heart, nor the observation of life and manners which recommend other authors in the same line. But she has taken the lead in a line of composition, appealing to those powerful and general sources of interest, a latent sense of supernatural awe and curiosity concerning whatever is hidden and mysterious; and if she has been ever nearly approached in this walk, which we should hesitate to affirm, it is at least certain that she has never been excelled or even equalled.

ALAIN RÉNÉ LE SAGE.

WE must on the present, as on former occasions, commence our biographical sketch of this delightful author, with the vain regret, that we can say little of his private life which can possibly interest the public. The distinguished men of genius, whom, after death, our admiration is led almost to canonize, have the lot of the holy men, who, spending their lives in obscurity, poverty, and maceration, incur contempt, and perhaps persecution, to have shrines built for the protection of their slightest relics, when once they are no more. Like the life of so many of those who have contributed most largely to the harmless enjoyments of mankind, that of Le Sage was laborious, obscure, and supported with difficulty by the precarious reward of his literary exertions.

Alain Rene Le Sage was born in a village near to the town of Vannes, in Brittany, about the year 1668. The profession of his father is not mentioned; but as he bequeathed some property to his son, he could not have been of the very lowest rank. Unfortunately he died early, and his son fell under the tutelage of an uncle, so careless of one of the most sacred duties of humanity, that he neglected alike the fortune and education of his ward. The latter defect was in a great measure supplied by the affection of the Père Bochard of the order of the Jesuits, Principal of the College of Vannes, who, interested in the talents displayed by the young Le Sage, took pleasure in cultivating his taste for literature. Our author, however, must have been late in attracting Bochard's notice; for when he came to Paris in 1693, in his twenty-fifth year, his principal object was to prosecute his philosophical studies, with what ultimate view does not appear.

With good humour and liveliness, joined to youth, and, it is said, a remarkably handsome person, Le Sage soon felt the influence of the Parisian atmosphere, was much engaged in society, and distinguished by an intrigue with a woman of rank, who shared with him, as his biographer expresses it, her heart and fortune. How this amour terminated we are not told, but one of a better and more virtuous character succeeded. Le Sage became enamoured of a beautiful young woman, the daughter of a joiner in the Rue de la Mortellerie, married her, and from that period found his principal happiness in domestic affection. By this union he had three sons, whose fortunes we shall afterwards have occasion to mention, and a daughter, whose filial piety

is said to have placed her sole occupation in contributing to the domestic enjoyment of her celebrated parent.

Le Sage continued after his marriage to frequent the circles of Paris, where literary men mingled as guests upon easy terms, and appears to have acquired several sincere and active friends, among whom the Abbé de Lyonne entitled himself not only to the author's personal gratitude, but to that of posterity. He settled upon Le Sage a pension of six hundred livres, and made him, besides, many valuable presents, yet served him much more essentially by directing his attention to Spanish literature, which he was afterwards so singularly to combine with that of his own country.*

Danchel, a man of some celebrity, engaged Le Sage in a translation of the "Letters of Aristenetus," which he caused to be printed at Chartres (though the title bears Rotterdam), in 1695.

The particular circumstances of Spain had given a strong cast of originality to the character of its literature. The close neighbourhood of so many petty kingdoms, so frequently engaged in intestine wars, occasioned numerous individual adventures, which could not have taken place under any one established and extended government. The high romantic character of chivalry which was cherished by the natives, the vicinity of the Moors, who had imported with them the wild, imaginative, and splendid fictions of Araby the Blessed—the fierceness of the Spanish passions of love and vengeance, their thirst of honour, their unsparing cruelty,—placed all the materials of romance under the very eye of the author who wished to use them. If his characters were gigantic and overstrained in the conception, the writer had his apology in the temper of the nation where his scene was laid; if his incidents were extravagant and improbable, a country in which Castilians and Arragonese, Spaniards and Moors, Mussulmans and Christians, had been at war for so many ages, could furnish historians with real events, which might countenance the boldest flights of the romance. And here it is impossible to avoid remarking, that the French, the gayest people in Europe, have formed their stage on a plan of declamatory eloquence, which all other nations have denounced as intolerable; while the Spaniard, grave, solemn, and stately, was the first to introduce in the theatre all the bustle of lively and complicated intrigue;—the flight and the escape, the mask and ladder of ropes, closets, dark lanterns, trap doors, and the whole machinery of constant and hurried action; and that with such a profusion of invention, that the Spanish stage forms a mine in which the dramatic authors of almost all other countries have wrought for ages, and are still working, with very slight chance either of failure or detection.

Le Sage was not slow in endeavouring to turn to his own advantage

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* So early as 1704, Le Sage understood the language so well as to give a translation of Avellaneda's "Continuation of Don Quixote," which gave so much offence to Cervantes.

his acquaintance with the Spanish drama. He translated from the original of Don Francisco de Rojas, "Le Traître Puni." It was not acted, but printed in the year 1700. Another Play, "Don Felix de Mendoce," he translated from Lope de Vega; but this also remained unacted, and was not even printed, until the author published his "Théâtre," in 1739.

"Le Point d'Honneur," another translation from the Spanish, was performed at the Théâtre Français, in 1702, without success. The satire turned upon the pedantic punctilios formerly annexed to the discussion of personal "dependencies," as they were called, when men quarrelled by the book, and arranged a rencontre according to the rules of logic. This fantastic humour, which, so early as the age of Shakspeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher, had been successfully ridiculed on the English stage, was probably rather too antiquated to be the subject of satire on that of Paris, in the beginning of the 18th century. "The Point of Honour" was only twice represented.

In 1707, "Don Cæsar Ursin," a comedy, translated by Le Sage from the Spanish of Calderon, was acted and condemned at the Théâtre Français. To make the author some amends, the same audience received, with the most marked applause, the lively farce entitled "Crispin rival de son Maître," which Garrick introduced upon the English stage under the title of "Neck or Nothing." It is uncommon for a dramatic author to be applauded and condemned for two different pieces in the same day; but Le Sage's destiny was even still more whimsical. "Don Cæsar," we have said, was hissed in the city, and "Crispin" applauded. At a representation before the court, the judgment was reversed—the play was applauded, and the farce condemned without mercy. Time has confirmed the judgment of the Parisians, and annulled that of Versailles.

Le Sage yet made another essay on the regular stage, with his comedy of "Turcaret," in which he has painted the odious yet ridiculous character of a financier, risen from the lowest order of society by tricks and usury, prodigal of his newly-acquired wealth upon a false and extravagant mistress of quality, and refusing to contribute even to relieve the extreme necessity of his wife and near relations. As men of business, and a class so wealthy, the financiers have always possessed interest at court, and that interest seems to have been exerted with success to prevent so odious a personification of their body from appearing on the stage. The embargo was removed by an order of Monseigneur, dated 15th October, 1708. While the play was yet in his portfolio, Le Sage had an opportunity to show how little his temper was that of a courtier. He had been pressed to read his manuscript comedy at the Hôtel de Bouillon, at the hour of noon, but was detained till two o'clock by the necessity of attending the decision of a lawsuit in which he was deeply interested. When he at length appeared, and endeavoured to plead his excuse, the Duchess of Bouillon received his apology with coldness, haughtily remarking, he had made the company lose two hours in waiting for his arrival.—"It is easy to make up the

loss, madam," replied Le Sage; "I will not read my comedy, and you will thus regain the lost time." He left the hotel, and could never be prevailed on to return thither.

"Turcaret" was acted, and was successful, in spite of the cabal formed against it by the exertions of those concerned in the finances. The author, in imitation of Molière, had a sort of dramatic criticism, in which he defended the piece against the censures which had been passed against it. The speakers in this critical interlude were Don Cleofas and the Diable Boiteux. They appeared on the stage as unseen spectators of the representation of "Turcaret," and spoke between the acts, like the assistants in Ben Jonson's "Every Man out of his Humour;" the tendency of the dialogue being to exult in the author's success, and ridicule the cabal by which it had been assailed. We learn, in the course of their conversation, that besides all the friends of the author, and all his friends' friends, a guard of the police was necessary to restrain the zeal of the clerks and dependents of the financial department. Asmodeus maintains his character as a satirist, and, pointing out to Don Cleofas a violent debate betwixt the friends and enemies of the piece, observes, that as it became warm, the one party spoke worse of the piece than they thought, and the other thought less good of it than they uttered.

"Turcaret" seems the only original piece which Le Sage composed on the plan of the French regular comedy; and though it had great poignancy of satire, the principal character on which the whole turns is almost too worthless and too wicked to be ridiculous, or truly comic. Indeed "Turcaret" is rendered so odious, that revenge was said to have held the pallet when the colours were mixed; and there was an unauthorized story at one time current, that Le Sage, deprived by a financier of a place in the revenue, had written this dramatic satire to be revenged upon the whole body of "Maltotiers." The author, probably, was not without some offers of preferment, for he used to speak to his son of having refused situations in which others became rich, but where his conscience must have kept him poor—expressions too vague for a biographer to found anything upon them, yet which seem to exclude the idea of his having held any employment under a farmer-general of the revenues. His connexion with the Théâtre Français, on which alone such regular pieces can be presented, was soon afterwards broken off. Le Sage had offered to them, in 1708, a small piece, in one act, called "La Tontine;" it was not acted until 1732; and though the cause is not precisely known, it is obvious that the rejection gave much offence to the author. Le Sage was also much provoked at the airs of superiority assumed by the performers towards the authors, and he has recorded his revenge by the unfavourable and ridiculous colours in which he has represented the theatrical profession in his romance.

The truth seems to be, that his former attempts were unsuccessful, because they were founded upon the Spanish plan of intrigue, in incident and situation, and were not therefore much valued by the Parisians, whom the excellent Molière had accustomed to pieces of

character and sentiment. "Turcaret" was indeed more in the taste of the age, and was accordingly better relished; but the scenes hang so loosely together, and the plot possesses so little interest of any kind, that it may be termed rather a dramatic satire than a proper comedy. On the whole, Le Sage's failure as a comic poet will not excite the surprise of those who may have patience to peruse his plays.

For the sake of connexion, we may trace Le Sage's dramatic career to a period with the greater brevity, that it contains but little to interest the reader. From the service of the established National Theatre, Le Sage transferred his pen to those minor establishments, termed *De la Foire*, which did not pretend, and, indeed, were not permitted, to offer to the public regular dramas, but only to act vaudevilles, or small light interludes set to music, and where the music was supposed to be the principal attraction.

These subordinate theatres were a refinement upon the puppet-shows and such like exhibitions, which used to be shown during the two great Fairs of St. Laurence and St. Germain; and it was under this colour that the manager and actors of the *Foire* endeavoured to elude the monopoly enjoyed by the Théâtre Français, and were alternately indulged or restricted in their privileges, as they were able to find protection at court. The sort of pieces represented at the *Foire* came at length to bear the name of the Comic Opera, of which Le Sage was the soul. He composed, either entirely, or with the assistance of his friends Dominique and Fuselier, no less than a hundred and upwards of these interludes, farces, and light pieces, which cost little effort to so inventive a genius, and which floated or sunk as popular opinion willed it, never omitting any opportunity which presented itself to ridicule, parody, and satirize the "Romans," for so the actors of the regular theatres were termed, in the cant language of the *Foire*. These exertions were attended with such a degree of profit, as, with the revenue arising from his other publications, enabled Le Sage, now the father of a family, to maintain himself and them in a calm and modest, but comfortable independence.

In 1721, the Comic Opera of the *Foire* was for a time suppressed. An attempt was made to continue the amusement, and elude the restriction, under different devices. For this purpose, Francisque, the manager, for whom Le Sage had long laboured, caused pieces, composed in monologue, to be acted on his stage. Le Sage and Fuselier, late the allies of Francisque, had recourse to another device, and acted their pieces as formerly, in music and dialogue, but by the intervention of puppets, instead of real actors—an idea which afterwards occurred to Fielding. These rival theatres carried on their several undertakings, in spite both of the comedians of the Théâtre Français, and of each other, and some satirical skirmishes passed between them. In "Arlequin Deucalion," a piece in monologue, written by the celebrated Piron, Le Sage and his consort Fuselier are subjected to ridicule by the following *jeu de mots*: Punchinello is made

to ask, "*Pourquoi le fol de temps en temps ne diroit-il pas des bonnes choses, puisque* LE SAGE *de temps en temps dit de si mauvaises?*" In the same piece, Arlequin throws a pair of pistols into the sea, praying there might never more be word spoken "*de pistolets, de fusil, ni de* FUSELIER." Such jests break no bones, and probably discomposed our author's temper as little as they injured his reputation. The embargo was removed from the performances at the *Foire*, in the course of about two years, and our author resumed his ordinary labours in behalf of its theatre, which he continued so late as the year 1738, during which he produced three pieces, which were probably his last dramatic efforts, as he had then attained his seventieth year.

It has been said of Le Sage's works, that no writings are more generally and widely known, than those of his which are remembered, while none are so decidedly and utterly forgotten as those which have been consigned to neglect. All the slight dramas which we have noticed, as forming so great and essential a part of the labours of his life, fall under the latter class—many have never been printed, and of those which have issued from the press, very few are now read. Nothing can be more slight than their texture. The whim of the day—any remarkable accident—any popular publication, affords a hint for the story. The airs, like those of the "Beggar's Opera," are founded on the common popular ballads and vaudevilles, and nothing is too trivial or absurd to be admitted into the dialogue. At the same time, there occur touches both of wit, nature, and humour; as how could it be otherwise in the slightest works of Le Sage? The French critics, who are indisputably the best judges, incline to think, judging from "Turcaret," that he would have risen to eminence, had he continued to cultivate the regular comedy, instead of sinking into the minor and subordinate ranks of an occupation which he held in contempt, and which he probably thought could not be too slightly executed. Don Cleofas, in the *Critique de Turcaret*, says to Asmodeus, as they survey the audience at the Théâtre Français, "*La belle assemblée; que de dames!*—ASMODÉE. *Il y en auroit encore d'avantage, sans les spectacle de la Foire. La plupart de femmes y courent avec fureur. Je suis ravi de les voir dans le goût de leurs lacquais et de leurs cochers.*"—Thus thought Le Sage originally of the dignity of those labours in which he was to spend his life, and the indifference with which he was contented to exercise his vocation, shows that his opinion of its importance was never enhanced. Goldoni, in circumstances nearly similar, created a national drama, and a taste for its beauties; but Le Sage was to derive an undying name from works of a different description.

We willingly leave consideration of these ephemeral and forgotten effusions of the moment, composed for the small theatre of the *Foire*, to speak of the productions which must afford delight and interest so long as human nature retains its present constitution. The first of these was "Le Diable Boiteux," which Le Sage published in 1707.

The title and plan of the work were derived from the Spanish of Luez Valez de Guevara, called "El Diablo Cojuelo," and such satires on manners as had been long before written in Spain by Cervantes and others. But the fancy, the lightness, the spirit, the wit, and the vivacity of the "Diable Boiteux" were entirely communicated by the enchanting pen of the lively Frenchman. The plan of the work was in the highest degree interesting, and having, in its original concoction, at once a cast of the romantic and of the mystical, is calculated to interest and to attract by its own merit, as well as by the pleasing anecdotes and shrewd remarks upon human life, of which it forms, as it were, the framework and enchasing. The Mysteries of the Cabalists afforded a foundation for the story, which, grotesque as it is, was not in those times held to exceed the bounds of probable fiction; and the interlocutors of the scene are so happily adapted to the subjects of their conversation, that all they say and do has its own portion of natural appropriation.

It is impossible to conceive a being more fitted to comment upon the vices, and to ridicule the follies of humanity, than an *esprit follet* like Asmodeus, who is as much a decided creation of genius, in his way, as Ariel or Caliban. Without possessing the darker powers and propensities of a Fallen Angel, he presides over the vices and the follies, rather than the crimes of mankind—is malicious rather than malignant; and his delight is to gibe, and to scoff, and to teaze, rather than to torture ;—one of Satan's light infantry, in short, whose business is to goad, perplex, and disturb the ordinary train of society, rather than to break in upon and overthrow it. This character is maintained in all Asmodeus says and does, with so much spirit, wit, acuteness, and playful malice, that we never forget the fiend, even in those moments when he is very near becoming amiable as well as entertaining.

Don Cleofas, to whom he makes all his diverting communications, is a fiery young Spaniard, proud, high-spirited, and revengeful, and just so much of a libertine as to fit him for the company of Asmodeus. He interests us personally by his gallantry and generous sentiments: and we are pleased with the mode in which the grateful fiend provides for the future happiness of his liberator. Of these two characters neither is absolutely original. But the Devil of Guevara is a mere bottle-conjuror, who amuses the student by tricks of legerdemain, intermixed with strokes of satire, some of them very acute, but devoid of the poignancy of Le Sage. Don Cleofas is a more literal copy from the Spanish author. There is no book in existence, in which so much of the human character, under all its various shapes and phases, is described in so few words, as in the "Diable Boiteux." Every page, every line, bears marks of that sure tact and accurate development of human weakness and folly, which tempt us to think we are actually listening to a Superior Intelligence, who sees into our minds and motives, and, in malicious sport, tears away the veil which we endeavour to interpose betwixt these and our actions. The satire of Le

Sage is as quick and sudden as it is poignant; his jest never is blunted by anticipation: ere we are aware that the bow is drawn, the shaft is quivering in the very centre of the mark. To quote examples, would be to quote the work through almost every page; and, accordingly, no author has afforded a greater stock of passages, which have been generally employed as apothegms, or illustrations of human nature and actions: and no wonder, since the force of whole pages is often compressed in fewer words than another author would have employed sentences. To take the first example that comes: the fiends of Profligacy and Chicane contend for possession and direction of a young Parisian. Pillardoc would have made him a *commis*, Asmodeus a *débauché*. To unite both their views, the infernal conclave made the youth a *monk*, and effected a reconciliation between their contending brethren. "We embraced," says Asmodeus, "and have been mortal enemies ever since." It is well observed by the late editor of Le Sage's works, that the traits of this kind, with which the "Diable Boiteux" abounds, entitle it, much more than the Italian scenes of Gherardi, to the title of the Grenier a Sel, conferred on the latter work by the sanction of Boileau. That great poet, nevertheless, is said to have been of a different opinion. He threatened to dismiss a valet whom he found in the act of reading the "Diable Boiteux." Whether this proceeded from the peevishness of indisposition under which Boileau laboured in 1707; whether he supposed the knowledge of human life, and all its chicanery, to be learned from Le Sage's satire, was no safe accomplishment for a domestic; or whether, finally, he had private or personal causes for condemning the work and the author, is not now known. But the anecdote forms one example, amongst the many, of the unjust estimation in which men of genius are too apt to hold their contemporaries.

Besides the power of wit and satire displayed in the "Diable Boiteux," with so much brilliancy, there are passages in which the author assumes a more serious and moral tone; he sometimes touches upon the pathetic, and sometimes even approaches the sublime. The personification of Death is of the latter character, until we come to the point where the author's humour breaks forth, and where, having described one of the terrific phantom's wings as painted with war, pestilence, famine, and shipwreck, he adorns the other with the representation of young physicians taking their degree.

To relieve the reader from the uniformity which might otherwise have attached to the hasty and brief sketches of what is only subjected to the eye, Le Sage has introduced several narratives in the Spanish taste, such as the History of the Count de Belflor, and the novel called the Force of Friendship. Cervantes had set the example of varying a long narrative, by the introduction of such novels, or *historiettes*. Scarron and others had followed the plan, but with less propriety than Le Sage, since it must be owned, that in a work of which the parts are so unconnected with each other, as in the "Diable Boiteux,"

such relief is more appropriate than when the novel serves inartificially to interrupt the progress of a principal story.

The immediate popularity of the "Diable Boiteux" was increased at the time of publication, by the general belief that Le Sage, who lived so much in the world, and was so close an observer of what passed around him, had, under Spanish names, and with fictitious circumstances, recounted many Parisian anecdotes, and drawn many characters of the court and city. Some of these were immediately recognised. The spendthrift Dufresny (supposed to be a descendant of Henry IV. by his grandmother, a female called La Belle Jardinière d'Anet) was recognised as the old bachelor of rank, who married his laundress, to get rid of her claim. The story of the German baroness, who curled her hair with the promise of marriage made to her by an ardent but imprudent lover, relates to a similar anecdote of the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos. Baron, the celebrated actor, is the dramatic hero, who dreams that the gods had decreed him an apotheosis, by transforming him into a stage decoration. The celebrated Helvetius was generally supposed to be the original of the sage Sangrado; and doubtless other individuals of the faculty, which Le Sage, like Molière, persecuted with his raillery, were also known. The satire of both authors flowed, perhaps, more freely, that each of them enjoyed a state of good health, which enabled them to set the faculty at defiance, and also because the professional recompense of physicians, on the continent, was so mean as to degrade their character in society, and subject them to all the ridicule which, since the days of Juvenal, has attached to learning in rags.

Besides the personal allusions which we have noticed, there are doubtless many others in the novel, which might be easily understood at the time; and the rage for private scandal probably carried the spirit of applying passages in the work to existing persons and circumstances, much farther than the writer intended.

The popularity of the "Diable Boiteux" was unbounded at its first appearance. The strongest proof of the ardour with which it was received, was, that two young men entering the same bookseller's shop, in which there chanced to be only one copy of the work, contested the possession of it by fighting upon the spot, and the victor having wounded his antagonist, carried off the volume as the prize of the field. Certainly this well-attested anecdote, to which the popularity of Asmodeus gave occasion, deserved to be recorded by the Demon himself. One Dancourt, also a dramatist, who supplied his deficiencies of genius and invention by his promptitude in seizing every topic of popular interest, brought the subject of the "Diable Boiteux" on the stage, in two parts, the first of which ran for thirty-five nights, the second for seventy-two.

It only remains to be said of this celebrated moral satire, that nineteen years after it had appeared in a single volume, the author published it with augmentations, which increased the work to two. This

addition had the usual fate of Continuations, and was not, at the time, considered as equal to the original publication; but it would now be difficult to perceive any difference between them. The Dialogues of the Chimneys of Madrid, which were for the first time appended to the "Diable Boiteux," in the new addition just mentioned, were more justly censured as inferior to that celebrated work. The personification itself is a very awkward one, and forms a singular contrast to the unrivalled contrivance by which Don Cleofas acquires the knowledge of the interior of the dwellings of men, and even of the secrets of their bosoms.

The three first volumes of "Gil Blas de Santillane," comprehending the life of that most excellent person, down to his first retreat to Lirias, raised the fame of Le Sage to the highest pitch, and secured it upon an immovable basis. Few have ever read this charming book without remembering, as one of the most delightful occupations of their life, the time which they first employed in the perusal; and there are few also who do not occasionally turn back to its pages with all the vivacity which attends the recollection of early love. It signifies nothing at what time we have first encountered the fascination; whether in boyhood, when we were chiefly captivated by the cavern of the robbers, and other scenes of romance; whether in more advanced youth, but while our ignorance of the world yet concealed from us the subtle and poignant satire which lurks in so many passages of the work; whether we were learned enough to apprehend the various allusions to history and public matters with which it abounds, or ignorant enough to rest contented with the more direct course of the narration—the power of the enchanter over us is alike absolute, under all these circumstances. If there is anything like truth in Gray's opinion, that to lie upon a couch and read new novels was no bad idea of Paradise, how would that beatitude be enhanced, could human genius afford us another "Gil Blas!"

Le Sage's claim to originality, in this delightful work, has been idly, I had almost said ungratefully, contested by those critics who conceive they detect a plagiarist wherever they see a resemblance in the general subject of a work to one which has been before treated by an inferior artist. It is a favourite theme of laborious dulness, to trace out such coincidences; because they appear to reduce genius of the higher order to the usual standard of humanity, and, of course, to bring the author nearer a level with his critics. It is not the mere outline of a story—not even the adopting some details of a former author, which constitutes the literary crime of plagiarism. The proprietor of the pit from which Chantrey takes his clay, might as well pretend a right in the figure into which it is moulded under his plastic fingers; and the question is in both cases the same—not so much from whom the original rude substance came, as to whom it owes that which constitutes its real merit and excellence.

It is therefore no disparagement to Le Sage, that long before his time there existed in other countries, and particularly in Spain, that

species of fiction to which "Gil Blas" may be in some respects said to belong. There arises in every country a species of low or comic romance, bearing somewhat the same proportion to the grave or heroic romance, which farce bears to tragedy. Readers of all countries are not more, if indeed they are equally delighted, with the perusal of high deeds of war and chivalry, achieved by some hero of popular name, than with the exploits of some determined free-booter, who follows his illicit trade by violence, or of some notorious sharper, who preys upon society by address and stratagem. The lowness of such men's character, and the baseness of their pursuits, do not prevent their hazards, their successes, their failures, their escapes, and their subsequent fate, from being deeply interesting, not to the mere common people only, but to all who desire to read a chapter in the great book of human nature. We may use, though not in a moral sense, the oft-quoted phrase of Terence, and acknowledge ourselves interested in the tale, because *we* are *men* and the events are *human*.

In Spain, many of their most ingenious men took pleasure in making studies from low life, as their countryman, Murillo, found the favourite subjects of his pencil among the sunburnt gipsies, shepherds, and muleteers. Thus the character of the "Picaro," or Adventurer, had been long a favourite subject in Spanish fiction. "Lazarillo de Tormes" had been written by Juan de Luna; the History of "Paul the Sharper," by the celebrated Quevedo. Even Cervantes had touched upon such a subject in the novel of "Riconete and Cortadillo," in which there are some scenes of low life drawn with all the force of his powerful pen. But "Guzman d'Alfarache" was the most generally known of any of the class, and had been long since translated into most European languages. If Gil Blas' history had a prototype among these Spanish stories, it must have probably been in that of Guzman; and some slight resemblance may be discovered betwixt some of the incidents; for instance, the circumstances in which Guzman is about to marry the daughter of a wealthy Genoese, and that of the excellent Don Raphael, in the house of Pedro de Moyadas. In like manner, the incident of that worthy assuming the dress of a dead hermit, is anticipated by Lazarillo de Tormes, in the second part of his History; and probably many other resemblances, or, if the reader pleases to call them so, plagiarisms, might be pointed out; for as the author furnished the plots of his dramatic pieces very often at the expense of the Spaniards, there is no probability that he would scruple to borrow from their romances whatever he found suitable to his own purpose.

There has been indeed, an unauthenticated account of Le Sage having obtained possession of some manuscripts of Cervantes', which he had used liberally, and without acknowledgment, in the construction of his "Gil Blas." A translation of Le Sage's novels into Spanish, bears also on the title-page the vaunt, that this operation has restored them to the language *in* which they were originally

written. But the styles of Cervantes and Le Sage are so essentially different, though each in itself is masterly, that, in the absence of positive evidence, one would as soon be induced to believe that the Frenchman wrote "Don Quixote," as that the Spaniard composed "Gil Blas." If Le Sage borrowed anything from Spain, excepting some general hints, such as we have noticed, it may have been some of the detached novels, which, as in the "Diable Boiteux," are interwoven in the history, though with less felicity than in the earlier publication, where they do not interrupt the march of any principal narrative. On the other hand, it is no doubt wonderful, that merely by dint of acquaintance with Spanish literature, Le Sage should have become so perfectly intimate, as he is admitted to be on all hands, with the Spanish customs, manners, and habits, as to conduct his reader through four volumes without once betraying the secret that the work was not composed by a native of Spain. Indeed, it is chiefly on this wonderful observation of costume, and national manners, that the Spanish translator founds his reclamation of the work, as the original property of Spain. Le Sage's capacity of identifying himself with the child of his imagination, in circumstances in which he himself never was placed, though rare in the highest degree, is not altogether singular; De Foe, in particular, possessed it in a most extraordinary degree. It may be added, that this strict and accurate attention to costume is confined to externals, so far as the principal personage is concerned. Gil Blas, though wearing the Golillo, Capa, and Spada, with the most pure Castilian grace, thinks and acts with all the vivacity of a Frenchman, and displays, in many respects, the peculiar sentiments of one.

The last French editor of Le Sage's works thinks that "Gil Blas" may have had a prototype in the humorous but licentious "History of Francion," written by the Sieur Moulinet de Parc. I confess I cannot see any particular resemblance which the "History of Gil Blas" has to that work, excepting that the scene of both lies chiefly in ordinary life, as may be said of the "Roman Comique" of Scarron. The whole concoction of "Gil Blas" appears to me as original, in that which constitutes the essence of a composition, as it is inexpressibly delightful.

The principal character, in whose name and with whose commentaries the story is told, is a conception which has never been equalled in fictitious composition, yet which seems so very real, that we cannot divest ourselves of the opinion that we listen to the narrative of one who has really gone through the scenes of which he speaks to us. Gil Blas' character has all the weaknesses and inequalities proper to human nature, and which we daily recognise in ourselves and in our acquaintance. He is not by nature such a witty sharper as the Spaniards painted in the characters of Paolo or Guzman, and such as Le Sage himself has embodied in the subordinate sketch of Scipio, but is naturally disposed towards honesty, though with a mind unfortunately too ductile to resist the tempta-

tions of opportunity or example. He is constitutionally timid, and yet occasionally capable of doing brave actions; shrewd and intelligent, but apt to be deceived by his own vanity; with wit enough to make us laugh with him at others, and follies enough to turn the jest frequently against himself. Generous, good-natured, and humane, he has virtues sufficient to make us love him, and as to respect, it is the last thing which he asks at his reader's hand. Gil Blas, in short, is the principal character in a moving scene, where, though he frequently plays a subordinate part in the action, all that he lays before us is coloured with his own opinions, remarks, and sensations. We feel the individuality of Gil Blas alike in the cavern of the robbers, in the episcopal palace of the Archbishop of Grenada, in the bureau of the minister, and in all the other various scenes through which he conducts us so delightfully, and which are, generally speaking, very slightly connected together, or rather no otherwise related to each other, than as they are represented to have happened to the same man. In this point of view, the romance is one which rests on character rather than incident; but although there is no main action whatsoever, yet there is so much incident in the episodical narratives, that the work can never be said to linger or hang heavy.

The son of the squire of Asturias is entrusted also with the magic wand of the "Diable Boiteux," and can strip the gilding from human actions with the causticity of Asmodeus himself. Yet, with all this power of satire, the moralist has so much of gentleness and good humour, that it may be said of Le Sage, as of Horace, *Circum præcordia ludit.* All is easy and good-humoured, gay, light, and lively; even the cavern of the robbers is illuminated with a ray of that wit with which Le Sage enlightens his whole narrative. It is a work which renders the reader pleased with himself and with mankind, where faults are placed before him in the light of follies rather than vices, and where misfortunes are so interwoven with the ludicrous, that we laugh in the very act of sympathizing with them. All is rendered diverting—both the crimes and the retribution which follows them. Thus, for example, Gil Blas, during his prosperity, commits a gross act of filial undutifulness and ingratitude; yet we feel, that the intermediation of Master Muscada the grocer, irritating the pride of a *parvenu*, was so exactly calculated to produce the effect which it operated, that we continue to laugh with and at Gil Blas, even in the sole instance in which he shows depravity of heart. And then, the lapidation which he undergoes at Oviedo, with the disappointment in all his ambitious hopes of exciting the admiration of the inhabitants of his birthplace, is received as an expiation completely appropriate, and suited to the offence. In short, so strictly are the pages of "Gil Blas" confined to what is amusing, that they might perhaps have been improved by some touches of a more masculine, stronger, and firmer line of morality.

It ought not to escape notice, that Le Sage, though, like Cervantes, he considers the human figures which he paints as his principal

object, fails not to relieve them by exquisite morsels of landscape, slightly touched indeed, but with the highest keeping, and the most marked effect. The description of the old hermit's place of retreat may be given as an example of what we mean.

In the "History of Gil Blas" is also exhibited that art of fixing the attention of the reader, and creating, as it were, a reality even in fiction itself, not only by a strict attention to costume and locality, but by a minuteness, and at the same time a vivacity of narrative, comprehending many trifling circumstances which might be thought to have escaped every one's memory, excepting that of an actual eye-witness. By such a circumstantial detail, the author has rendered us as well acquainted with the four pavilions and *corps de logis* of Lirias, as if we had ourselves dined there with Gil Blas and his faithful follower Scipio. The well-preserved tapestry, as old as the Moorish kingdom of Valencia, the old-fashioned damask chairs—that furniture of so little intrinsic value, which yet made, in its proper place, such a respectable appearance—the dinner, the siesta—all give that closing scene in the third volume such a degree of reality, and assure us so completely of the comfort and happiness of our pleasant companion, that the concluding chapters, in which the hero is dismissed, after his labours and dangers, to repose and happiness—these very chapters, which in other novels are glanced over as matter of course, are perhaps the most interesting in the "Adventures of Gil Blas." Not a doubt remains on the mind of the reader concerning the continuance of the hero's rural felicity, unless he should happen (like ourselves) to feel some private difficulty in believing that the new cook from Valencia could ever rival Master Joachim's excellence, particularly in the matter of the olla-podrida, and the pig's ears marinated. Indeed, to the honour of that author be it spoken, Le Sage, excellent in describing scenes of all kinds, gives such vivacity to those which interest the gastronome in particular, that an epicure of our acquaintance used to read certain favourite passages regularly before dinner, with the purpose of getting an appetite like that of the Licentiate Sedillo, and, so far as his friends could observe, the recipe was always successful.

At this happy point the "Adventures of Gil Blas" originally closed; but the excessive popularity of the work induced the author to add the fourth volume, in which Gil Blas is again brought from his retreat, and of new involved in the perils of a court life. Besides that the author in some degree repeats himself—for Gil Blas' situation under the Conde D'Olivarez is just the counterpart to that which he held under the Duke of Lerma—the Continuation has the usual fault of such works, joins awkwardly with the original story, and is written evidently with less vigour and originality. Its reception from the public, according to a French critic, resembled the admiration given to a decaying beauty, whose features remain the same, though their freshness and brilliancy are abated by time.

Even after the death of Le Sage, it seemed as if his masterpiece was to give rise to as many Continuations as the "History of Amadis." A

spurious "History of Don Alphonzo Blas de Lirias, Son of Gil Blas of Santillane, pretending to be a posthumous work of the original author, appeared at Amsterdam, and has since been reprinted.

In 1717, Le Sage published a translation, or rather a poor imitation, of Boiardo's "Orlando Inamorato," which wild and imaginative poem he has degraded into a mere fairy tale, stripping it effectually of the magical colouring which it had received from the original writer. The author intended to have committed the same violence upon Ariosto's splendid epic, but fortunately the consummation of the rash attempt did not take place. The ingenious and lively Frenchman was as completely devoid of the rich poetical fancy of the Tuscan poet, as the language in which he wrote was inadequate to express the beauties of the Italian original.

Le Sage found a more congenial employment in compiling the "Adventures of the Chevalier de Beauchene," a brave sea-officer, or rather corsair—the Paul Jones of that period, in the West Indian seas. He professed to have derived the materials of this work, which was never completed, from the widow of the Chevalier, who resided at Tours. Le Sage has well supported the character of the frank, bold, half-civilized sailor, but apparently found the task troublesome, if we may judge from the numerous episodes which he has engrafted on the principal story. Probably the work did not become popular, for though a Continuation was in some degree promised, it never appeared. The "Chevalier de Beauchene" came out in 1732, and in the same year Le Sage published a translation, or rather an abridgment of the "Adventures of Guzman d'Alfarache," the most celebrated of the Spanish romances *à la picaresque*.

In 1734, Le Sage translated the "History of Vanillo Gonzales, called the Merry Bachelor," from the Spanish of Vincentio Espinella.

Apparently these subordinate labours had renewed the author's taste for original composition. The "Bachelor of Salamanca" was his last work of this description; and although we can easily descry the flatness and insipidity which indicate the approach of age, and the decay of the finer powers of observation and expression, we are nevertheless ever and anon reminded of that genius which in its vigour produced "Gil Blas" and the "Diable Boiteux." "The Bachelor of Salamanca" is, in comparison, a failure, but such as Le Sage alone could have committed; and many passages have all that raciness which distinguishes his happier productions. The scene, for example, in which Carambola is employed in reading to slumber the Member of the Council of the Indies, who unpitiably awakens at every instant when his reader stops to take a mouthful of refreshment, might have been told by Asmodeus himself. It must be owned that the scenes laid in Mexico have little merit of any kind. Le Sage had not the same accurate knowledge of the manners of New Spain, which he possessed respecting those of the mother country, and the account with which he presents us is in proportion flat and uninteresting. If it be true that Le Sage, jealous, like other old authors, of the earlier productions of

excellence in the parts of valets, peasants, and other characters in low comedy. He was not less remarked for the worth of his private character, and his talents for society; and having early attained a situation in the Théâtre Français, he mixed with the best company in Paris. Yet his father could not for a long time hear of Montmenil's professional merit, or even of his private virtues, and the general respect in which he was held, without showing evident symptoms of great and painful emotion. At length a reconciliation was effected betwixt them, and, passing from displeasure to the most affectionate excess of parental fondness, it is said Le Sage could scarce bear to be separated from the son whose name he had hardly permitted to be mentioned before him. The death of Montmenil, which happened 8th September, 1743, in consequence of a cold caught at a hunting party, was such a blow to his father, then far advanced in life, that it determined his total retirement from Paris, and from the world.

The youngest son of our author also became a player, under the name of Pittenec; and it seems he was also a dramatic author, but made no distinguished figure in either capacity.

On the other hand, Le Sage's second son showed a more staid character than either of his brothers, became a student of theology, and took orders. By the patronage of the Queen (wife of Louis XV.) he became a Canon of the Cathedral of Boulogne, and had the benefit of a pension. The moderate independence which he enjoyed, enabled him, after his father had been entirely broken down in spirits, by the death of Montmenil, to receive both him, his sister, and his mother, under his roof, and to provide for them during the residue of their lives. The sister (who has not been before mentioned) was eminent for her filial tenderness, and dedicated her life to the comfort of her parents.

It was after his retreat to Boulogne, and while residing under the roof of his son the Canon, that we obtain an interesting account of Le Sage, then extremely aged, from the pen of the Comte de Tressan, to whom the ancient romances of France owe the same favour which has been rendered to those of England by the ingenious and excellent George Ellis. The reader will feel interested in receiving the communication in the words of the Count himself.

"Paris, 20th January, 1783.

"You have requested from me some account of the concluding period of the celebrated author of 'Gil Blas.' Here follow the few anecdotes which I am able to furnish.

"In the end of the year 1745, after the battle of Fontenoy, the late King having named me to serve under the Maréchal de Richelieu, I received counter orders at Boulogne, and remained there, commandant of the Boulenois, Poitou, and Picardy.

"Having learned that Mons. Le Sage, aged upwards of eighty years, with his wife nearly as old, resided at Boulogne, I was early desirous of visiting them, and of acquainting myself with their

his genius, preferred this work—the child of his old age, to his "Diable Boiteux" and "Gil Blas," we can only say, that the same decay which is visible in his talents, must have also affected his taste, and that he certainly had not invoked the assistance of the acute Asmodeus when he formed his opinion.

After the "Bachelor of Salamanca," Le Sage produced, in 1740, his last original work, "La Valise Trouvée," which appeared anonymously in that year. His last labours thus approached the character of those with which he opened his career; for the "Valise Trouvée" consists of a miscellaneous collection of letters upon various subjects, resembling those of Aristenetus, translated by our author in 1695.

A lively Collection of Anecdotes and Witticisms, published in 1743, closed the long labours of this excellent author. They are told with all the animation of his own particular humour, and we may suppose them to have been amassed in his portfolio, with the purpose of being one day amalgamated into a regular work, but given to the public in their present unconnected form, when age induced Le Sage, now in his 75th year, to lay aside his pen.

Having thus reviewed hastily the various literary labours of Le Sage, we have, in fact, nearly accomplished the history of his life, which appears to have been spent in the bosom of his family, and to have been diversified by no incident of peculiarity unconnected with his theatrical and literary engagements. His taste for retirement was, perhaps, increased by the infirmity of deafness, which attacked him so early as 1709, for he alludes to it in the critical interlude on the subject of "Turcaret." Latterly, it increased so much, that he was under the necessity of constantly using a hearing trumpet. His conversation was nevertheless so delightful, that when he went to his favourite coffee-house, in the Rue Saint Jacques, the guests formed a circle round him, nay, even mounted upon the seats and upon the tables, in order to catch the remarks and anecdotes which this celebrated observer of human nature could tell in society with the same grace and effect with which he recorded them in his works.

Le Sage's circumstances, though very moderate, seem always to have been easy, and his domestic life was quiet and happy. Its tenor was somewhat interrupted by the taste which carried upon the stage his eldest and youngest sons. Nothing could be more natural than that the theatrical art should have invincible charms for the sons of a dramatic author; but Le Sage, who had expressed the greatest contempt and dislike of that profession, which he had painted in the most ridiculous and odious colours, felt great pain from his sons' making choice of it, which probably was not lessened when the eldest obtained an honourable station among those very Romans of the Théâtre Français, with whom his father had waged for so many years a satirical war. This eldest son of Le Sage was a youth of great hopes, and a most amiable disposition. He had been educated for the bar. Upon embracing the profession of a comedian, he assumed the name of Montmenil, under which he became distinguished for his

situation. I found that they lived in family with their son, a Canon of the Cathedral of Boulogne; and never was filial piety more tenderly occupied than his, in cheering and supporting the latter days of parents, who had scarce any other resource than the moderate revenue of their son.

"The Abbé Le Sage enjoyed the highest respect at Boulogne. His talents, his virtues, his social affections, rendered him dear to Monseigneur de Pressy, his worthy bishop, to his fraternity, and to the public.

"I have seen few resemblances more striking than that of the Abbé Le Sage to his brother Mons. de Montmenil; he had even a portion of his talents, and of his most agreeable qualities. No one could read verses more agreeably. He possessed the uncommon art of that variation of tone, and of employing those brief pauses which, without being actual declamation, impress on the hearers the sentiments and the beauties of the author.

"I had known, and I regretted Mons. Montmenil. I entertained esteem and friendship for his brother; and the late Queen, in consequence of the account which I had to lay before her of the Abbé Le Sage's situation, and his narrow fortune, procured him a pension upon a benefice.

"I had been apprized not to go to visit Mons. Le Sage till near the approach of noon; and the feelings of that old man made me observe, for a second time, the effect which the state of the atmosphere produces in the melancholy days of bodily decline.

"Mons. Le Sage, awaking every morning so soon as the sun appeared some degrees above the horizon, became animated, acquired feeling and force, in proportion as that planet approached the meridian; but as the sun began to decline, the sensibility of the old man, the light of his intellect, and the activity of his bodily organs, began to diminish in proportion; and no sooner had the sun descended some degrees under the horizon, than he sunk into a lethargy, from which it was difficult to rouse him.

"I took care only to make my visit at that period of the day when his intellect was most clear, which was the hour after he had dined. I could not view without emotion the respectable old man, who preserved the gaiety and urbanity of his better years, and sometimes even displayed the imagination of the author of the "Diable Boiteux" and of "Turcaret." But one day, having come more late than usual, I was sorry to see that his conversation began to resemble the last homilies of the Bishop of Grenada, and I instantly withdrew.

"Mons. Le Sage had become very deaf. I always found him seated near a table on which lay a large hearing-trumpet; that trumpet, which he sometimes snatched up with vivacity, remained unmoved on the table, when the nature of the visit which he received did not encourage him to hope for agreeable conversation. As I commanded in the province, I had the pleasure to see him always make use of it in conversation with me; and it was a lesson which prepared me to

sustain the petulant activity of the hearing-trumpet of my dear and illustrious associate and friend Mons. de la Condamine.*

"Monsieur Le Sage died in winter 1746-7. I considered it as an honour and duty to attend his funeral, with the principal officers under my command. His widow survived him but a short time; and a few years afterwards, the loss of the Abbé Le Sage became the subject of regret to his Chapter, and the enlightened society to which he was endeared by his virtues."

The interesting account of Monsieur de Tressan having conducted Le Sage to an honoured tomb, we have but to add, that an epitaph, placed over his grave, expressed, in indifferent poetry, the honourable truth, that he was the friend of Virtue rather than of Fortune.† Indeed, when the giddy hours of youth were passed, his conduct seems to have been irreproachable; and if, in his works, he has assailed vice rather with ridicule than with reproach, and has, at the same time, conducted his story through scenes of pleasure and of licence, his Muse has moved with an unpolluted step, even where the path was somewhat miry. In short, it is highly to the honour of Le Sage, that—differing in that particular from any of his countrymen who have moved in the same walk of letters—he has never condescended to pander to vice by warmth or indelicacy of description. If Voltaire, as it is said, held the powers of Le Sage in low estimation, such slight regard was particularly misplaced towards one, who, without awaking one evil thought, was able, by his agreeable fictions, to excite more lasting and more honourable interest than the witty Lord of Ferney himself, even though Asmodeus sat at his elbow to aid him in composing "Candide" and "Zadig."

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* Mons. de la Condamine, very deaf and very importunate, was the terror of the members of the Academie, from the vivacity with which he urged inquiries, which could only be satisfied by the inconvenient medium of his hearing-trumpet.

† Sous ce tombeau Le Sage abattu,
Par le ciseau de la Parque importune.
S'il ne fut pas ami de la Fortune,
Il fut toujours ami de la Vertu.

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CHARLES JOHNSTONE.

OF the author of the "Adventures of a Guinea," a satire which, from its resemblance to the "Diable Boiteux," arranges naturally with those of the author of "Gil Blas," we can say but little.

CHARLES JOHNSTONE was an Irishman by birth, though it is said a Scotchman by descent, and of the Annandale family. If so, we have adopted the proper orthography, though his name seems to have sometimes been spelt Johnson. He received a classical education; and, being called to the Bar, came to England to practise. Johnstone, like Le Sage—and the coincidence is a singular one—was subject to the infirmity of deafness, an inconvenience which naturally interfered with his professional success;—although, by a rare union of high talents with eloquence and profound professional skill, joined to an almost intuitive acuteness of apprehension, we have, in our time, seen the disadvantage splendidly surmounted. But Johnstone possessed considerable abilities, of which he has left at least one admirable example, in the "Adventures of a Guinea." His talents were of a lively and companionable sort, and as he was much abroad in the world, he had already, in his youth, kept such general society with men of all descriptions, as enabled him to trace their vices and follies with a pencil so powerful.

"Chrysal" is said to have been composed at Lord Mount-Edgcumbe's, in Devonshire, during a visit to his lordship. About 1760, the work was announced in the newspapers as "a dispassionate distinct account of the most remarkable transactions of the present times all over Europe." The publication immediately followed, and, possessing at once the allurement of setting forth the personal and secret history of living characters, and that of strong expression and powerful painting, the public attention was instantly directed towards it. A second edition was called for almost immediately, to which the author made several additions, which are incorporated with the original text. But the public avidity being still unsatisfied, the third edition, in 1761, was augmented to four volumes. The author, justly thinking that it was unnecessary to bestow much pains in dovetailing his additional matter upon the original narrative, and conscious that no one was interested in the regular transmission of "Chrysal" from one hand to another, has only connected the original work and the continuation by references, which will not be found always either

accurate or intelligible,—a point upon which he seems to have been indifferent.

After this successful effort, Mr. Johnstone published the following obscure and forgotten works:

"The Reverie; or, A Flight to the Paradise of Fools." 2 vols. 12mo, 1762. A satire.

"The History of Arsaces, Prince of Betlis." 2 vols. 12mo, 1774. A sort of political romance.

"The Pilgrim; or, A Picture of Life." 2 vols. 12mo, 1775.

"The History of John Juniper, Esq., *alias* Juniper Jack." 3 vols. 12mo, 1781. A romance in low life.

These publications we perused long since, but remember nothing of them so accurately as to induce us to hazard an opinion on their merits.

So late as 1782, twenty years after the appearance of "Chrysal," Mr. Johnstone went to seek fortune in India, and had the happy chance to find it there, though not without encountering calamity on the road. The *Brilliant*, Captain Mears, in which he embarked, was wrecked off the Joanna Islands, and many lives lost. Johnstone, with the captain and some others, was saved with difficulty.

In Bengal, Johnstone wrote much for the periodical papers, under the signature of Oneiropolos. He became joint-proprietor of one of the Bengal newspapers, acquired considerable property, and died about the year 1800; and, as is conjectured, in the seventieth year of his age. Most of these facts have been transferred from Mr. Chalmers's "Biographical Dictionary."

It is only as the author of what has been termed the Scandalous Chronicle of the time, that Johnstone's literary character attracts our notice. We have already observed, that there is a close resemblance betwixt the plan of "Chrysal" and that of the "Diable Boiteux." In both works, a Spirit, possessed of the power of reading the thoughts, and explaining the motives of mankind, is supposed to communicate to a mortal a real view of humanity, stripping men's actions of their borrowed pretexts and simulated motives, and tracing their source directly to their passions or their follies. But the French author is more fortunate than the English, in the medium of communication he has chosen, or rather borrowed from Guevara. Asmodeus is himself a personage admirably imagined and uniformly sustained, and who entertains the reader as completely by the display of his own character, as by that of any which he anatomizes for the instruction of Don Cleofas. Malicious as he is, the reader conceives even a kind of liking for the Fiend, and is somewhat disconcerted with the idea of his returning to his cabalistic bottle; nay, could we judge of the infernal regions by this single specimen, we might be apt to conceive, with Sancho Panza, that there is some good company to be found even in hell. Chrysal, on the other hand, is a mere elementary spirit, without feeling, passion, or peculiar character, and who only reflects back, like

a mirror, the objects which have been presented to him, without adding to or modifying them by any contribution of his own.

The tracing of a piece of coin into the hands of various possessors, and giving an account of the actions and character of each, is an ingenious medium for moral satire, which, however, had been already employed by Dr. Bathurst, the friend of Johnson, in the "Adventures of a Halfpenny," which form the forty-third Number of the "Adventurer," published 3rd April, 1753, several years before "Chrysal."

It is chiefly in the tone of the satire that the adventures of Chrysal differ from those of Le Sage's heroes. We have compared the latter author to Horace, and may now safely rate Charles Johnstone as a prose Juvenal. The Frenchman describes follies which excite our laughter—the Briton drags into light vices and crimes, which arouse our horror and detestation. And, as we before observed that the scenes of Le Sage might, in a moral point of view, be improved by an infusion of more vigour and dignity of feeling, so Johnstone might have rendered his satire more poignant, without being less severe, by throwing more lights among his shades, and sparing us the grossness of some of the scenes which he reprobates. As Le Sage renders vice ludicrous, Johnstone seems to paint even folly as detestable, as well as ridiculous. His Herald and Auctioneer are among his lightest characters; but their determined roguery and greediness render them hateful even while they are comic.

It must be allowed to this caustic satirist, that the time in which he lived called for such an unsparing and uncompromising censor. A long course of national peace and prosperity had brought with these blessings their usual attendant evils—selfishness, avarice, and gross debauchery. We are not now, perhaps, more moral in our conduct than men were fifty or sixty years since; but modern vice pays a tax to appearances, and is contented to wear a mask of decorum. A Lady H—— and the Pollard Ashe, so often mentioned in Horace Walpole's Correspondence, would not certainly dare to insult decency in the public manner then tolerated; nor would our wildest *débauchés* venture to imitate the orgies of Medmenham Abbey, painted by Johnstone in such horrible colours. Neither is this the bound of our improvement. Our public men are now under the necessity of being actuated, or at least appearing to be so, by nobler motives than their predecessors proposed to themselves. Sir Robert Walpole, who, after having governed so many years by the most open and avowed corruption, amassed for himself a more than princely fortune out of the spoils of the State, would not now be tolerated. This age would not endure the splendours of Houghton. Our late ministers and statesmen have died, almost without an exception, beggared and bankrupt; a sure sign, that if they followed the dictates of ambition, they were at least free from those of avarice: and it is plain that the path of the former may often lie parallel with that prescribed by public virtue, while the latter must always seduce its votary into the by-way of

private selfishness. The general corruption of the ministers themselves, and their undisguised fortunes, acquired by an avowed system of perquisites, carried, in our fathers' times, a corresponding spirit of greed and rapacity into every department, while, at the same time, it blinded the eyes of those who should have prevented spoliation. If those in subordinate offices paid enormous fees to their superiors, it could only be in order to purchase the privilege for themselves of cheating the public with impunity. And in the same manner, if commissaries for the army and navy filled the purses of the commanders, they did so only that they might thereby obtain full licence to exercise every sort of pillage, at the expense of the miserable privates. We were well acquainted with men of credit and character, who served in the Havannah expedition; and we have always heard them affirm, that the infamous and horrid scenes described in "Chrysal," were not in the slightest degree exaggerated. That attention to the wants, that watchful guardianship of the rights and interests, of the private soldier and sailor, which in our days do honour to these services, were then totally unknown. The commanders in each department had in their eye the amassing of wealth, instead of the gathering of laurels, as the minister was determined to enrich himself, with indifference to the welfare of his country; and the elder Pitt, as well as Wolfe, were considered as characters almost above humanity, not so much for the eloquence and high talents of the one, or the military skill of the other, as because they made the honour and interest of their country their direct and principal object. They dared, to use the classical phrase, to contemn wealth—the statesman and soldier of the present day would, on the contrary, not dare to propose it to himself as an object.

The comparative improvement of our manners, as well as of our government, is owing certainly, in a great measure, to more general diffusion of knowledge and improvement of taste. But it was fostered by the private virtues and patriotism of the late venerated monarch.* The check which his youthful frown already put upon vice and licence, is noticed in "Chrysal" more than once; and the disgrace of more than one minister, in the earlier part of his reign, was traced pretty distinctly to their having augmented their private fortunes, by availing themselves of their political information to speculate in the funds. The abuses in public offices have, in like manner, been restrained, the system of perquisites abolished, and all means of indirect advantage interdicted, as far as possible, to the servants of the public. In the army and navy the same salutary regulations have been adopted; and the Commander-in-Chief has proved himself the best friend to his family and country, in cutting up by the roots those infectious cankers which gnawed our military strength, and which are so deservedly stigmatized in the caustic pages of "Chrysal."

In Johnstone's time this reform had not commenced, and he might

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* George III.

well have said, with such an ardent temper as he seems to have possessed, *Difficile est satyram non scribere.* He has accordingly indulged his bent to the utmost; and as most of his characters were living persons, then easily recognised, he held the mirror to nature, even when it reflects such horrible features. His language is firm and energetic —his power of personifying character striking and forcible, and the persons of his narrative move, breathe, and speak, in all the freshness of life. His sentiments are, in general, those of the bold, high-minded, and indignant censor of a loose and corrupted age; yet it cannot be denied, that Johnstone, in his hatred and contempt for the more degenerate vices, of ingratitude, avarice, and baseness of every kind, shows but too much disposition to favour Churchill and other libertines, who thought fit to practise open looseness of manners, because they said it was better than hypocrisy. It is true, such vices may subsist along with very noble and generous qualities; but as all profligacy has its root in self-gratification and indulgence, it is always odds that the weeds rise so fast as to choke the slower and nobler crop.

The same indulgence to the usual freedom of a town life, seems to have influenced Johnstone's dislike to the Methodists, of whose founder, Whitfield, he has drawn a most odious and a most unjust portrait. It is not the province of the editor of a book of professed amusement to vindicate the tenets of a sect which holds almost all amusement to be criminal; but it is necessary to do justice to every one. The peculiar tenets of the Methodists are, in many respects, narrow and illiberal—they are also enthusiastical, and, acting on minds of a certain temperament, have produced the fatal extremities of spiritual presumption, or spiritual despair. But to judge as we would desire to be judged, we must try their doctrine, not by those points in which they differ, but by those in which they agree with all other Christians; and if we find that the Methodists recommend purity of life, strictness of morals, and a regular discharge of the duties of society, are they to be branded as hypocrites because they abstain from its amusements and its gaieties? Were the number of the Methodists to be multiplied by a hundred, there would remain enough behind to fill the theatres and encourage the fine arts.

Respecting the remarkable person by whom the sect was founded, posterity has done him justice for the calumnies with which he was persecuted during his life, and which he bore with the enduring fortitude of a confessor. The poverty in which Whitfield died proved his purity of heart, and refuted the charge so grossly urged, of his taking a selfish interest in the charitable subscriptions which his eloquence promoted so effectually. His enthusiasm—for Providence uses, in accomplishing great ends, the imperfections as well as the talents of his creatures—served to awaken to a consciousness of their deplorable state, thousands, to whose apathy and ignorance a colder preacher might have spoken in vain; and perhaps even the Church of England herself has been less impaired by the schism than benefited by the

effects of emulation upon her learned clergy. In a word, if Cowper's portrait of Whitfield has some traits of flattery, it still approaches far more near to the original than the caricature of Johnstone:—

> He loved the world that hated him—the tear
> That dropped upon the Bible was sincere.
> Assailed by scandal and the tongue of strife,
> His only answer was a blameless life;
> And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,
> Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
> Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
> Were followed well in him, and well transcribed.

We* think these remarks necessary to justice, in the Preface to a work, in which this memorable individual is so deeply charged. They can hardly be imputed to any other motive, since those likely to be gratified by this vindication cannot very consistently seek for it in this place. But readers of a different description may do well to remember, that the cant of imputing to hypocrisy all pretensions to a severer scale of morals, or a more vivid sense of religion, is as offensive to sound reason and Christian philosophy, as that which attaches a charge of guilt to matters of indifference, or to the ordinary amusements of life.

We would willingly hope that several of Johnstone's other characters, if less grossly calumniated than Whitfield, are at least considerably overcharged. The first Lord Holland was a thorough-bred statesman of that evil period, and the Earl of Sandwich an open libertine; yet they also had their lighter shades of character, although "Chrysal" holds them up to the unmitigated horror of posterity. The same may be said of others: and this exaggeration was the more easy, as Johnstone does not pretend that the crimes imputed to those personages were all literally committed, but admits that he invented such incidents as he judged might best correspond to the idea which he had formed of their character; thus rather shaping his facts according to a preconceived opinion, than deducing his opinion from facts which had actually taken place.

The truth is, that young, ardent, and bold, the author seems to have caught fire from his own subject, to have united credulity in belief with force of description, and to have pushed praise too readily into panegyric, while he exaggerated censure into reprobation. He everywhere shows himself strongly influenced by the current tone of popular feeling; nay, unless in the case of Wilkes, whose simulated patriotism he seems to have suspected, his acuteness of discrimination seldom enables him to correct public opinion. The Bill for the Naturalization of the Jews had just occasioned a general clamour, and we see Chrysal not only exposing their commercial character in the most odious colours, but reviving the ancient and absurd fable of their cele-

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* This memoir preceded the old novel "Chrysal."

brating the Feast of the Passover by the immolation of Christian infants. With the same prejudiced credulity he swallows, without hesitation, all the wild and inconsistent charges which were then heaped upon the order of the Jesuits, and which occasioned the general clamour for their suppression.

On the other hand, because it was the fashion to represent the continental war, which had for its sole object the protection of the Electorate of Hanover, as waged in defence of the Protestant religion, Johnstone has dressed up the selfish and atheistical Frederick of Prussia in the character of the Protestant hero, and put into his mouth a prayer adapted to the character of a self-devoted Christian soldier, who drew his sword in the defence of that religion which was enshrined in his own bosom. This is so totally out of all keeping and character, that one can scarce help thinking that the author has written, not his own sentiments, but such as were most likely to catch the public mind at the time.

But, feeling and writing under the popular impression of the moment, Johnstone has never failed to feel and write like a true Briton, with a sincere admiration of his country's laws, an ardent desire for her prosperity, and a sympathy with her interests, which more than atone for every error and prejudice. He testifies on many occasions his respect for the House of Brunswick, and leaves his testimony against the proceedings first commenced by Wilkes, and so closely followed by imitators of that unprincipled demagogue, for the purpose of courting the populace by slandering the throne. It is remarkable, that notwithstanding his zeal for King George and the Protestant religion, the Jacobite party, though their expiring intrigues might have furnished some piquant anecdotes, are scarcely mentioned in "Chrysal."

A Key to the personages introduced to the reader in "Chrysal," was furnished by the author himself to Lord Mount-Edgcumbe, and another to Captain Mears, with whom he sailed to India. It is published by Mr. William Davis, in his collection of "Bibliographical and Literary Anecdotes," with this caveat:—"The author's intention was to draw general characters; therefore, in the application of the Key, the reader must exercise his own judgment." When all exaggeration has been deducted from this singular work, enough of truth will stil remain in "Chrysal," to incline the reader to congratulate himself that these scenes have passed more than half a century before his time.

ROBERT BAGE.

ROBERT BAGE, a writer of no ordinary merit in the department of fictitious composition, was one of that class of men occurring in Britain alone, who unite successfully the cultivation of letters with those mechanical pursuits which, upon the continent, are considered as incompatible with the character of an author. The professors of letters are, in most nations, apt to form a *caste* of their own, into which they may admit men educated for the learned professions, on condition, generally speaking, that they surrender their pretensions to the lucrative practice of them; but from which mere burghers, occupied in ordinary commerce, are as severely excluded, as *roturiers* were of old from the society of the *noblesse*. The case of a paper-maker or a printer employing their own art upon their own publications, would be thought uncommon in France or Germany; yet such were the stations of Bage and Richardson.

The writer has been obliged by Miss Catherine Hutton, daughter of Mr. Hutton of Birmingham, well known as an ingenious and successful antiquary, with a memoir of the few incidents marking the life of Robert Bage, whom a kindred genius, as well as a close commercial intercourse, combined to unite in the bonds of strict friendship. The communication is extremely interesting, and the extracts from Bage's letters show, that amidst the bitterness of political prejudices, the embarrassment of commercial affairs, and all the teazing technicalities of business, the author of "Barham Downs" still maintained the good-humoured gaiety of his natural temper. One would almost think the author must have drawn from his own private letter-book and correspondence, the discriminating touches which mark the men of business in his novels.

The father of Robert Bage was a paper-maker at Darley, a hamlet on the river Derwent, adjoining the town of Derby, and was remarkable only for having had four wives. Robert was the son of the first, and was born at Darley on the 29th of February, 1728. His mother died soon after his birth; and his father, though he retained his mill, and continued to follow his occupation, removed to Derby, where his son received his education at a common school. His attainments here, however, were very remarkable, and such as excited the surprise and admiration of all who knew him. At seven years old he had made

a proficiency in Latin. To a knowledge of the Latin language succeeded a knowledge of the art of making paper, which he acquired under the tuition of his father.

At the age of twenty-three, Robert Bage married a young woman who possessed beauty, good sense, good temper, and money. It may be presumed that the first of these was the first forgotten; the two following secured his happiness in domestic life; the last aided him in the manufacture of paper, which he commenced at Elford, four miles from Tamworth, and conducted to the end of his days.

Though no man was more attentive to business, and no one in the country made paper so good of its kind, yet the direction of a manufactory, combined with his present literary attainments, did not satisfy the comprehensive mind of Robert Bage. His manufactory, under his eye, went on with the regularity of a machine, and left him leisure to indulge his desire of knowledge. He acquired the French language from books alone, without any instructor; and his familiarity with it is evinced by his frequent, perhaps too frequent, use of it in the "Fair Syrian." Nine years after his marriage he studied mathematics; and, as he makes one of his characters say, and as he probably thought respecting himself, "He was obliged to this science for a correct imagination, and a taste for uniformity in the common actions of life."

In the year 1765, Bage entered into partnership with three persons (one of them the celebrated Dr. Darwin), in an extensive manufactory of iron; and, at the end of fourteen years, when the partnership terminated, he found himself a loser, it is believed, of fifteen hundred pounds. The reason and philosophy of the paper-maker might have struggled long against so considerable a loss; the man of letters committed his cause to a better champion—literary occupation—the tried solace of misfortune, want, and imprisonment. He wrote the novel of "Mount Henneth," in two volumes, which was sold to Lowndes for thirty pounds, and published in 1781. The strong mind, playful fancy, liberal sentiments, and extensive knowledge of the author, are everywhere apparent: but, as he says himself, "too great praise is a bad letter of recommendation;" and truth, which he worshipped, demands the acknowledgment, that its sins against decorum are manifest.

The succeeding works of Bage were, "Barham Down," two volumes, published 1784; "The Fair Syrian," two volumes, published (about) 1787; "James Wallace," three volumes, published 1788; "Man as he is," four volumes, published 1792; "Hemsprong, or, Man as he is not," three volumes, published 1796. It is, perhaps, without parallel in the annals of literature, that, of six different works, comprising a period of fifteen years, the last should be, as it unquestionably is, the best. Several of Bage's novels were translated into German, and published at Frankfort.

Whoever has read Hayley's Life of Cowper will not be sorry that an author should speak for himself, instead of his biographer speaking

for him; on this principle are given some extracts from the letters of Robert Bage to his friend, William Hutton. Hutton purchased nearly all the paper which Bage made during forty-five years; and, though Bage's letters were letters of business, they were written in a manner peculiarly his own, and friendship was, more or less, interwoven in them; for trade did not, in him, extinguish, or contract, one finer feeling of the soul. Bage, in his ostensible character of a paper-maker, says—

"*March* 28, 1785.

"I swear to thee I am one of the most cautious men in the world with regard to the excise; I constantly interpret against myself in doubtful points; and, if I knew a place where I was vulnerable, I would arm it with the armour of Achilles. I have already armed myself all over with the armour of righteousness, but that signifies nothing with our people of excise."

"*August* 15, 1787.

"Oh how I wish thou wouldst bend all thy powers to write a history of Excise—with cases—showing the injustice, the inequality of clauses in Acts, and the eternal direction every new one takes towards the oppression of the subject: It might be the most useful book extant. Of whites and blues, blue demy only can come into thy magazine, and that at a great risk of contention with the Lords of the Exchequer; for I know not whether I have understood the sense of people who have seldom the good luck to understand themselves. The paper sent is charged at the lowest price at which a sober paper-maker can live, and drink small beer."

"*December* 10, 1788.

"Authors, especially when they have acquired a certain degree of reputation, should be candid, and addicted to speak good as well as evil, of poor dumb things. The rope paper is too thin, I own; but why abuse it from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot? If I have eyes, it has many good qualities, and I hope the good people of Birmingham may find them out. But it is too thin—I am heartily and sincerely concerned for it: But, as I cannot make it thicker, all I can do is to reduce the price. Thou proposest threepence a ream—I agree to it. If thou really believest sixpence ought to be abated, do it. Combine together the qualities of justice and mercy, and to their united influence I leave thee."

"*February* 23, 1789.

"The certainty that it cannot be afforded at the stipulated price, makes me run my rope paper too thin. Of this fault, however, I must mend, and will mend, whether thou canst, or canst not mend my price. I had rather lose some profit than sink a tolerable name into a bad one."

"*March* 11, 1793.

"I make no bill-of-parcels. I do not see why I should give myself the trouble to make thee bills-of-parcels, as thou canst make them thyself; and, more especially, when it is probable thou wilt make them

more to my liking than the issues of my own pen. If the paper is below the standard so far as to oblige thee to lower the price, I am willing to assist in bearing the loss. If the quantity overburthens thee, take off a shilling a bundle—or take off two: for thy disposition towards me—I see it with pleasure—is kindly."

"*June* 30, 1795.

"Everything looks black and malignant upon me.—Men clamouring for wages which I cannot give—women threatening to pull down my mill—rags raised by freight and insurance—Excise-officers depriving me of paper! Say, if thou canst, whether these gentlemen of the Excise-office can seize paper after it has left the maker's possession?—after it has been marked?—stamped?—signed with the officer's name?—Excise duty paid?—Do they these things?—Am I to hang myself?"

"*June* 6, 1799.

"Thou canst not think how teazing the excise-officers are about colour. They had nearly seized a quantity of common cap paper, because it was whitened by the frost. They have an antipathy to anything whiter than sackcloth."

Bage actually had paper seized by the excise-officers, and the same paper liberated, seized again, and again liberated. If his wisdom and integrity have been manifested in the foregoing extracts, the ignorance and folly of these men, or of their masters, must be obvious.

A few extracts, not so immediately connected with conduct in trade, may not be superfluous:—

"I swear by Juno, dear William, that one man cannot be more desirous of dealing with another than I am with thee. The chain that connects us cannot be snapped asunder without giving me pain almost to torture. Thou art not so sure of having found the place where Henry the Seventh was lost, as thou mightst have been of finding Elford and a friend.

"I received thy pamphlet,* and am not sure whether I have not read it with more pleasure than any of thy former works. It is lively, and the reasoning just. Only remember, it is sometimes against the institutions of juries and county courts that thou hast directed thy satire, which, I think, ought to be confined to the abuses of them. But why abusest thou me? Didst thou not know of Mount Henneth, and Barham Downs, before publication? Yea, thou didst. I think thou didst also of the Fair Syrian. Of what, then, dost thou accuse me? Be just. And why dost thou call me an infidel? Do I not believe in everything thou sayest? And am I not impatient for thy Derby? I am such a scoundrel as to grumble at paying 30 per cent. *ad valorem*, which I really do, and more, on my boards, as if one could do too much for one's king and country. But I shall be rewarded when thy History of Derby comes forth."

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* Dissertation on Juries.

"Miss Hutton was the harbinger of peace and good-will from the Reviewers. I knew she had taste and judgment; I knew also that her encomium would go beyond the just and proper bounds; but I also believed she would not condescend to flatter without some foundation."

"Eat my breakfast quietly, thou varlet! So I do when my house does not smoke, or my wife scold, or the newspapers do not tickle me into an irritation, or my men clamour for another increase of wages. But I must get my bread by eating as little of it as possible; for my Lord Pitt will want all I can screw of overplus. No matter. Ten years* hence, perhaps, I shall not care a farthing."

"Another meeting among my men! Another (the third) raising of wages! What will all this end in? William Pitt seems playing off another of his alarming manœuvres—Invasion—against the meeting of Parliament, to scare us into a quiet parting with our money."

"If thou hast been again into Wales, and hast not expired in ecstacy, I hope to hear from thee soon. In the interim, and always and evermore, I am thine."

"I am afraid thy straggling mode of sending me anybody's bills, and everybody's bills, will subject me often to returned ones. But I have received good at thy hands, and shall I not receive evil? Everything in this finest, freest, best of all possible countries, grows worse and worse, and why not thou?

"I looked for the anger thou talked'st of in thy last, but could not find it; and for what wouldst thou have been angry, if thou couldst? Turn thy wrath from me, and direct it against the winds and the fogs. In future I fear it will be directed against the collectors of dirty rags in London and in Germany, where the prices 'have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished'—but will not be so, because we begin the century by not doing what we ought to do. What we shall do at the end of it I neither know nor care."

In October, 1800, Bage had visited Hutton at Birmingham, where the latter still passed the hours of business, and had taken Bennett's Hill in his way home, to call on Catherine Hutton, the daughter of his friend. Both were alarmed at the alteration in Bage's countenance, which exhibited evident symptoms of declining health. They believed that they should see him no more; and he was probably impressed with the same idea, for, on quitting the house at Birmingham, he cordially shook hands with Samuel Hutton, the grand-nephew of

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* Bage lived eight months after the date of this letter, which was written Jan. 24, 180[illegible]

his friend, and said, "Farewell, my dear lad, we shall meet again in heaven."

At home, Bage seems to have indulged the hope of another meeting in the present world; for two months after his letter of January, he says, in a letter to Hutton, "Tell Miss Hutton that I have thought of her some hundred times since I saw her; insomuch that I feared I was falling in love. I do love her as much as a man seventy-three years of age, and married, ought to love. I like the idea of paying her a visit, and will try to make it reality some time—but not yet." In April he was scarcely able to write a letter. In June he was again capable of attending to business; but in reply to his friend, who had mentioned paying him a visit, he said, "I should have been glad and sorry, dear William, to have seen thee at Tamworth." On the 1st of September, 1801, he died.

Bage had quitted Elford, and during the last eight years of his life he resided at Tamworth, where he ended his days. His wife survived him. He had three sons, one of whom died as he was approaching manhood, to the severe affliction of his father. Charles, the eldest son, settled at Shrewsbury, where he was the proprietor of a very extensive cotton manufactory. He died in 1822, at the age of seventy. Edward the younger son, was apprenticed to a surgeon and apothecary at Tamworth, where he afterwards followed his profession. He died many years before his brother. Both possessed a large portion of their father's talents, and equalled him in integrity and moral conduct.

In his person, Robert Bage was somewhat under the middle size, and rather slender, but well proportioned. His complexion was fair and ruddy; his hair light and curling; his countenance intelligent, mild, and placid. His manners were courteous, and his mind was firm. His integrity, his honour, his devotion to truth, were undeviating and incorruptible; his humanity, benevolence, and generosity, were not less conspicuous in private life than they were in the principal characters in his works. He supplied persons he never saw with money, because he heard they were in want. He kept his servants and his horses to old age, and both men and quadrupeds were attached to him. He behaved to his sons with the unremitting affection of a father; but, as they grew up, he treated them as men and equals, and allowed them that independence of mind and conduct which he claimed for himself.

On the subject of servants, Bage says, in "The Fair Syrian," "I pity those unhappy masters, who, with unrelenting gravity, damp the effusions of a friendly heart, lest something too familiar for their lordly pride should issue from a servant's lip." Of a parent he says, in the same work, "Instead of the iron rod of parents, he used only the authority of mild persuasion, and cultivated the affections of his children by social intercourse, and unremitting tenderness." It matters not into what month Robert Bage put these sentiments; they were

his own, his practice was conformable to them, and their good effects were visible on all around him.

The following comparison between Robert Bage and his friend, William Hutton, was written by Charles Bage, son of the former, in a letter to Catherine Hutton, daughter of the latter, October 6, 1816.

"The contrast between your father's life and mine is curious. Both were distinguished by great natural talents; both were mild, benevolent, and affectionate, qualities which were impressed on their countenances; both were indignant at the wantonness of pride and power; both were industrious, and both had a strong attachment to literature: yet, with these resemblances, their success in life was very different; my father never had a strong passion for wealth, and he never rose into opulence. Your father's talents were continually excited by contact with 'the busy haunts of men;' my father's were repressed by a long residence in an unfrequented place, in which he shunned the little society he might have had, because he could not relish the conversation of those whose minds were less cultivated than his own. In time, such was the effect of habit, that, although when young he was lively and fond of company, he enjoyed nothing but his book and pen, and a pool at quadrille with ladies. He seems, almost always, to have been fonder of the company of ladies than of men."

After this satisfactory account of Bage's life and character, there remains nothing for the writer but to offer a few critical remarks upon his compositions.

The general object of Robert Bage's compositions, is rather to exhibit character than to compose a narrative; rather to extend and infuse his own political and philosophical opinions, in which a man of his character was no doubt sincere, than merely to amuse the reader with the wonders, or melt him with the sorrows of a fictitious tale. In this respect he resembled Voltaire and Diderot, who made their most formidable assaults on the system of religion and politics which they assailed, by embodying their objections in popular narratives. Even the quaint, facetious, ironical style of this author seems to be copied from the lesser political romances of the French school; and if Bage falls short of his prototypes in wit, he must be allowed to exhibit, upon several occasions, a rich and truly English vein of humour, which even Voltaire does not possess.

Respecting the tendency and motive of these works, it is not the writer's purpose to say much. Bage appears, from his peculiar style, to have been educated a Quaker; at least—for we may be wrong in the above inference—he has always painted the individuals of that primitive sect of Christians in amiable colours, when they are introduced as personages into his novels. If this was the case, however, he appears to have wandered from the tenets of the Friends into the wastes of scepticism; and a sectary, who had reasoned himself into an infidel, could be friend neither to the Church of England, nor the doc-

trines which she teaches. His opinions of State affairs were perhaps a little biassed by the frequent visits of the excisemen, who levied taxes on his commodities, for the purpose of maintaining a war which he disapproved of. It was most natural that a person who considered tax-gatherers as extortioners, and the soldiers, paid by the taxes, as licensed murderers, should conceive the whole existing state of human affairs to be wrong; and if he was conscious of talent, and the power of composition, he might, at the same time, naturally fancy that he was called upon to put it to rights. No opinion was so prevalent in France, and none passed more current among the admirers of French philosophy in Britain, as that the power of framing governments, and of administering them, ought to remain with persons of literary attainments; or, in other words, that those who can most easily and readily write books, are therefore best qualified to govern states. Whoever peruses the writings of the ingenious Madame de Staël, will perceive that she (one of the most remarkable women certainly of her time) lived and died in the belief, that revolutions were to be effected, and countries governed, by a proper succession of clever pamphlets. A nation which has long enjoyed the benefit of a free press, does not furnish so many believers in the omnipotence of literary talent. Men are aware that every case may be argued on both sides, and seldom render their assent to any proposition merely on account of the skill with which it is advocated, or the art and humour with which it is illustrated. The writer was never one of those who think that a good cause can suffer much by free discussion, and though differing entirely both from his political and theological tenets, admitted Mr. Bage's novels into the collection which he superintended, as works of talent and genius.

The satirical novel is a species of composition more adapted to confirm those who hold similar opinions with the author, by affording them a triumph at the expense of their opponents, than to convince those who, their minds being yet undecided, may be disposed calmly to investigate the subject. They who are inclined to burn an obnoxious or unpopular person in effigy, care little how far his dress and external appearance are exaggerated; and, in the same way, it requires little address in an author, to draw broad caricatures of those whom he regards as foes, or to make specious and flattering representations of such as he considers as friends. They who look on the world with an impartial eye, will scarcely be of opinion, that Mr. Bage has seized the true features which distinguish either the upper or lower ranks. The highest and the lowest rank in society, are each indeed liable to temptations peculiarly their own, and their relative situation serves to illustrate the wisdom of the prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." But these peculiar propensities, we think, will in life be found considerably different from the attributes ascribed to the higher and lower classes by Mr. Bage. In most cases, the author's great man resembles the giant of the ancient romance of chivalry, whose evil qualities were presumed from his superior stature, and who was

to be tilted at and cut to pieces, merely because he stood a few inches higher than his fellow-mortals. But the very vices and foibles of the higher classes in modern times are of a kind different from what Bage has frequently represented them. Men of rank, in the present day, are too indifferent, and too indolent, to indulge any of the stormy passions, and irregular but vehement desires, which create the petty tyrant, and perhaps formerly animated the feudal oppressor. Their general fault is a want of energy, or, to speak more accurately, an apathy, which is scarcely disturbed even by the feverish risks to which they expose their fortune, for the sole purpose, so far as can be discerned, of enjoying some momentary excitation. Amongst the numbers, both of rank and talent, who lie stranded upon the shore of Spenser's Lake of Idleness, are many who only want sufficient motives for exertion, to attract at once esteem and admiration; and among those, whom we rather despise than pity, a selfish apathy is the predominating attribute.

In like manner, the habits of the lower classes, as existing in Britain, are far from affording, exclusively, that rich fruit of virtue and generosity, which Mr. Bage's writings would teach us to expect. On the contrary, they are discontented, not unnaturally, with the hardships of their situation, occupied too often in seizing upon the transient enjoyments which chance throws in their way, and open to temptations which promise to mend their condition in life, or at least to extend the circle of their pleasures at the expense of their morals.

Those, therefore, who weigh equally, will be disposed to think that the state of society most favourable to virtue, may be most successfully sought amongst those who neither want nor abound, who are neither sufficiently raised above the necessity of labour and industry, to be satiated by the ready gratification of every wild wish as it arises, nor so much depressed below the general scale of society, as to be exasperated by struggles against indigence, or seduced by the violence of temptations which that indigence renders it difficult to resist.

Though we have thus endeavoured to draw a broad line of distinction between the vices proper to the conditions of the rich and the poor, the reader must be cautious to understand these words in a relative sense. For men are not rich or poor in relation to the general amount of their means, but in proportion to their wants and their wishes. He who can adjust his expenses within the limits of his income, how small soever that may be, must escape from the temptations which most easily beset indigence; and the rich man, who makes it his business, as it is his duty, to attend to the proper distribution of his wealth, will be equally emancipated from those to which opulence is peculiarly obnoxious.

This misrepresentation of the different classes in society, is not the only speculative error in which Bage has indulged during these poetic narratives. There is in his novels a dangerous tendency to slacken the reins of discipline upon a point, where, perhaps, of all others, society must be benefited by their curbing restraint.

Fielding, Smollett, and other novelists, have with very indifferent taste, brought forward their heroes as rakes and debauchees, and treated with great lightness those breaches of morals, which are too commonly considered as venial in the male sex; but Bage has extended, in some instances, that licence to the female sex, and seems at times even to sport with the ties of marriage, which is at once the institution of civil society most favourable to religion and good order, and that which, in its consequences, forms the most marked distinction between man and the lower animals. All the influence which women enjoy in society,—their right to the exercise of that maternal care which forms the first and most indelible species of education; the wholesome and mitigating restraint which they possess over the passions of mankind; their power of protecting us when young, and cheering us when old,—depend so entirely upon their personal purity, and the charm which it casts around them, that to insinuate a doubt of its real value, is wilfully to remove the broadest corner-stone on which civil society rests, with all its benefits, and with all its comforts. It is true, we can easily conceive that a female like Miss Ross, in "Barham Downs," may fall under the arts of a seducer, under circumstances so peculiar as to excite great compassion; nor are we so rigid as to say, that such a person may not be restored to society, when her subsequent conduct shall have effaced recollection of her error. But she must return thither as a humble penitent, and has no title to sue out her pardon as a matter of right, and assume a place among the virtuous of her sex as if she had never fallen from her proper sphere. Her disgrace must not be considered as a trivial stain, which may be communicated by a husband as an exceeding good jest to his friend and correspondent; there must be, not penitence and reformation alone, but humiliation and abasement, in the recollection of her errors. This the laws of society demand even from the unfortunate; and to compromise further, would open a door to the most unbounded licentiousness. With this fault in principle is connected an indelicacy of expression frequently occurring in Bage's novels, but which, though a gross error in point of taste, we consider as a matter of much less consequence than the former.

Having adverted to this prominent error in Mr. Bage's theory of morals, we are compelled to remark, that his ideas respecting the male sex are not less inaccurate, considered as rules of mental government, than the over-indulgence with which he seems to regard female frailty. Hermsprong, whom he produces as the ideal perfection of humanity, is paraded as a man who, freed from all the nurse and all the priest has taught, steps forward on his path, without any religious or political restraint, as one who derives his own rules of conduct from his own breast, and avoids or resists all temptations of evil passions, because his reason teaches him that they are attended with evil consequences. In the expressive words of our moral poet, Wordsworth, he is

> A reasoning self-sufficient thing,
> An intellectual all-in-all.

But did such a man ever exist? or are we, in the fair construction of humanity, with all its temptations, its passions, and its frailties, entitled to expect such perfection from the mere force of practical philosophy? Let each reader ask his own bosom, whether it were possible for him to hold an unaltered tenor of moral and virtuous conduct, did he suppose that to himself alone he was responsible, and that his own reason, a judge so peculiarly subject to be bribed, blinded, and imposed upon by the sophistry with which the human mind can gloss over those actions to which human passions so strongly impel us, was the ultimate judge of his actions? Let each reader ask the question at his own conscience, and if he can honestly and conscientiously answer in the affirmative, he is either that faultless monster which the world never saw, or he deceives himself as grossly as the poor devotee, who, referring his course of conduct to the action of some supposed internal inspiration, conceives himself upon a different ground, incapable of crime, even when he is in the very act of committing it.

We are not treating this subject theologically; the nature of our present work excludes such serious reasoning. But we would remind, even in these slight sketches, those who stand up for the self-sufficient morality of modern philosophy, or rather sophistry, that the experiment has long since been tried on a large scale. Whatever may be the inferiority of the ancients in physical science, it will scarce be denied, that in moral science they possessed all the lights which the unassisted Reason, now referred to as the sufficient light of our paths, could possibly attain. Yet, when we survey what their system of Ethics did for the perfection of the human species, we shall see that but a very few even of the teachers themselves have left behind them such characters as tend to do honour to their doctrines. Some philosophers there were, who, as instructors in morality, showed a laudable example to their followers; and we will not invidiously inquire how far these were supported in their self-denial, either by vanity, or the desire of preserving consistency, or the importance annexed to the founder of a sect; although the least of these motives afford great support to temperance, even in cases where it is not rendered easy by advanced age, which of itself calms the more stormy passions. But the satires of Juvenal, of Petronius, and, above all Lucian, show what slight effect the doctrines of Zeno, Epictetus, Plato, Socrates, and Epicurus, produced on their avowed followers; and how little influence the beard of the Stoic, the sophistry of the Academician, and the self-denied mortification of the Cynics, had upon the sects which derived their names from these distinguished philosophers. We shall find that these pretended despisers of sensual pleasure shared the worst vices of the grossest age of society, and added to them the detestable hypocrisy of pretending that they were all the while guided by the laws of true wisdom and of right reason.

If, in modern times, they who own the restraint of philosophical discipline alone have not given way to such grossness of conduct, it is

because those principles of religion, which they affect to despise, have impressed on the public mind a system of moral feeling, unknown till the general prevalence of the Christian faith; but which, since its predominance, has so generally pervaded European society, that no pretender to innovation can directly disavow its influence, though he endeavours to show that the same results, which are recommended from the Christian pulpit, and practised by the Christian community, might be reached by the unassisted efforts of that human reason to which he counsels us to resign the sole regulation of our morals.

In short to oppose one authority in the same department to another, the reader is requested to compare the character of the philosophic Square in Tom Jones, with that of Bage's philosophical heroes; and to consider seriously whether a system of Ethics, founding an exclusive and paramount court in a man's own bosom for the regulation of his own conduct, is likely to form a noble, enlightened, and generous character, influencing others by superior energy and faultless example; or whether it is not more likely, as in the observer of the rule of right, to regulate morals according to temptation and to convenience, and to form a selfish, sophistical hypocrite, who, with morality always in his mouth, finds a perpetual apology for evading the practice of abstinence, when either passion or interest solicits him to indulgence.

We do not mean to say, that, because Bage entertained erroneous notions, he therefore acted viciously. The history of his life, so far as known to us, indicates a contrary course of conduct. It would seem, from his language, as we have already said, that he had been bred among the strict and benevolent sect of Friends; and if their doctrines carried him some length in speculative error, he certainly could derive nothing from them to favour laxity of morals. In his fictitious works, the Quakers are always brought forward in an amiable point of view; and the characters of Arnold, and particularly of Miss Carlile, are admirable pictures of the union of talent, and even wit, with the peculiar manners and sentiments of these interesting and primitive persons. But if not vicious himself, Bage's leading principles are such as, if acted upon, would introduce vice into society; in men of a fiercer mould, they would lead to a very different line of conduct from his own; and, such being the case, it was the writer's duty to point out the sophistry on which they are founded.

The works of Bage, abstracted from the views against which we have endeavoured to caution the reader, are of high and decided merit. It is scarce possible to read him without being amused, and, to a certain degree, instructed. His whole efforts are turned to the development of human character; and, it must be owned, he possessed a ready key to it. The mere story of the novels seldom possesses much interest—it is the conduct of his personages, as thinking and speaking beings, in which we are interested; and, contrary to the general case, the reader is seldom or never tempted to pass over the dialogue in order to continue the narrative. The author deals occasionally in quick and improbable conversions, as in that of Sir George Osmond, from selfish-

ness and avarice, to generosity and liberality, by the mere loveliness of virtue in his brother and his friends. And he does not appear to have possessed much knowledge of that species of character which is formed by profession or by nationality. His seamen are indifferent; his Irishmen not beyond those usually brought on the stage: his Scotchmen still more awkward caricatures, and the language which he puts in their mouths, not similar to any that has been spoken since the days of Babel. It is in detecting the internal working of a powerful understanding, like that of Paracelsus Holman, that Bage's power chiefly consists; and great that power must be, considering how much more difficult it is to trace those varieties of character which are formed by such working, than merely to point out such as the mind receives from the manners and customs of the country in which it has ripened.

A light, gay, pleasing air, carries us agreeably through Bage's novels; and when we are disposed to be angry at seeing the worse made to appear the better reason, we are reconciled to the author by the ease and good-humour of his style. We did not think it proper to reject the works of so eminent an author from this collection,* merely on account of speculative errors. We have done our best to place a mark on these; and, as we are far from being of opinion, that the youngest and most thoughtless derive their serious opinions from productions of this nature, we leave them for our reader's amusement, trusting that he will remember that a good jest is no argument; that a novelist, like the master of a puppet-show, has his drama under his absolute authority, and shapes the events to favour his own opinions; and that whether the Devil flies away with Punch, or Punch strangles the Devil, forms no real argument as to the comparative power of either one or other, but only indicates the special pleasure of the master of the motion.

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THE END.

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